

STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Cognate Volumes by the Author

CHRISTIAN UNITY IN PRACTICE AND PROPHECY

THE PROGRESS OF CHURCH FEDERATION

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS

THE NEW CHURCH AND THE NEW GERMANY: A STUDY OF
CHURCH AND STATE

CHAOS IN MEXICO: THE CONFLICT OF CHURCH AND STATE

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

TRENDS OF CHRISTIAN THINKING

Edited and Written

in Collaboration with others

THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION, 6 volumes

THE CHURCHES OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

Steps Toward the World Council

Origins of the Ecumenical Movement as Ex-
pressed in the Universal Christian
Council for Life and Work

By
CHARLES S. MACFARLAND
*General Secretary Emeritus of the Federal Council
of the Churches of Christ in America*

Introduction by
ADOLF KELLER, D.D.



NEW YORK
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, MCMXXXVIII by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

All rights reserved: no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the Publisher, except by a reviewer desiring to quote brief passages for inclusion in a notice to be inserted in a newspaper or periodical.

INTRODUCTION

THE ecumenical movement started with theological, ecclesiastical and practical considerations which, hitherto, had paid little attention to the fact that a new page of Christian Church history began when the churches began to seek their unity.

For more than four hundred years the process of diversification and differentiation had divided the Christian churches. A movement for reintegration and co-operation is now gathering strength which already has quite a history. There are few men living today who witnessed the beginnings of this movement. It is important that its history should be written by such co-workers who helped plant the roots of the movement in our churches and who themselves had a part in its shaping. Dr. Macfarland is one of those who not only watched its early growth, had a great personal share in the planning and developing of the ecumenical movement, but also observed that the process of history is accompanied by imagination and legends which often give a wrong picture of what has really happened. Dr. Macfarland is in a position to give a true picture of "how it was," and in giving us a history of the ecumenical movement of our time fills a gap in the movement itself, because every movement creates a tradition which should not be forgotten, as it contains the germs for future development. The author has a personal

knowledge of facts, persons, circumstances concerning the birth and evolution of the ecumenical movement, which is an invaluable source of information. By writing this history of the movement he has rendered a great service to the cause of Christian unity.

ADOLF KELLER.

Geneva, Switzerland.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	9
I. FORECASTS OF FAITH: EARLY APPROACHES TO THE ECUMENICAL IDEA	12
Foreign Missions and Bible Circulation. The World's Evangelical Alliance. The Ideals of Josiah Strong. His Prophecies. An Early Plan for an Ecumenical Body. The Idea Assumes New Forms: Interdenominational, Undenominational, Denominational. "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order." Waymarks on the Road to Stockholm.	
II. CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES: FEAR OF WAR LEADS TO A NEW APPROACH	29
In Great Britain and Germany. America Joins the Forces. The First Church Peace Conference, Constance, 1914. A World Alliance for International Friendship Survives the War. The Stream of Ecumenism Widens in War-time. Switzerland Appears. Scandinavia Enters on the Scene. The Ideal of an Ecumenical Conference Emerges. The American Federal Council Pursues the Quest. Scandinavian Bishops Persist. The World Alliance Solves the Problem.	
III. THE WAY IS CHARTED: AN "ECUMENICAL CON- FERENCE" PROMISES REALITY: GENEVA, 1920	54
The Federal Council Helps Prepare the Way. "The Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work" is Projected. The Call is Issued. The Eastern Churches Assent. Approaches to Anglicanism. Efforts to Include Rome. The Churches Unite for Mutual Help. National Federation Develops. Messages on Unity Multiply.	
IV. PATIENCE AND PERSUASION PREVAIL: THE ROAD FROM GENEVA, 1920, TO STOCKHOLM, 1925	83
The Work of Preparation. Peterborough, 1921. Helsingborg, 1922; the Programme Prepared. Zurich, 1923; Principles Determined. Amsterdam, 1923. Birmingham (Copec), 1924. Zurich and Farnham Castle, 1925.	

V. THE VISION TAKES STRUCTURAL FORM: STOCKHOLM IS REACHED: THE ROAD GOES ON TO OXFORD AND EDINBURGH	87
Transitions and Transformations in the Ecumenical Movement. Stockholm Summarized. Looking Backward from the Contemporary Standpoint. Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937. The Pervading Spirit.	
APPENDIX	104
The Call to the Stockholm Conference	104
The Message of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work	107
The Letter to Robert H. Gardiner	109
Officials of the World Conference at Stockholm, 1925	111
The Programme for Stockholm	111
Messages of Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123
INDEX	125

FOREWORD

AT THE Conference on Church, Community and State held under the auspices of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, at Oxford, in 1937, the question was frequently asked: "How did it happen that, while social and political philosophies and ideologies were arising to divide races, nations, and churches, the Christians of the world were also developing an organized, ecumenical¹ body prepared at least to face together, the critical issues of Church and State?" As one inquirer put it: "How did it come about that, simultaneously with the rise of totalitarian States, we have a movement towards what Christopher Dawson² has called the 'totalitarian church'?"

This led the writer to take a census of the delegates and associates at Oxford. It was discovered that of the one hundred members of the original meeting at Geneva in 1920, which instituted the Stockholm meeting of 1925 and the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, only thirteen were registered as present at Oxford;³ that at least twenty had died and that

¹ While having a more general meaning, the term "ecumenical" appears to have been conceded to, or appropriated by, the Christian bodies seeking to universalize the Christian churches as one coherent whole.

² *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward, 1935. Obviously Mr. Dawson's organizational concept bears but slight resemblance to the Universal Christian Council. Perhaps "totalitarian Christianity" would describe the latter.

³ F. W. Burnham, James Cannon, Jr., William E. Gardner, Charles S. Macfarland, William P. Merrill, of the United States;

a large proportion of those living were in retirement. Going farther back, to men who will appear in this volume as the more original pioneers, and who may be said to have been the primary originators of the historic Constance conference in 1914, but two are living.⁴

Perhaps this naturally explains why this narrative seems timely, if not, indeed, almost too late to say all that might be said. It will confine itself to the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and present the record only up to Stockholm, 1925.⁵ It has been prepared in consultation with several colleagues in order that, like Luke, we may also have the narrative from other men "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses," in the hope that we may add our own "understanding of all things from the very first." Pastor Nils Karlstroem, former chaplain of the late Nathan Soederblom, Archbishop of Upsala, has supplied invaluable information from Dr. Soederblom's files. The author has also had access to the remarkably complete records in the office of Lord Dickinson

F. H. O. Melle and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, of Germany; Hans Fliedner, of Spain; Yngve Brilioth, of Sweden; Adolf Keller, of Switzerland; The Metropolitan of Seleucia, Germanos (now Metropolitan of Thyateira); the Archbishop of Nubia (now Patriarch and Pope of Alexandria); and Professor Chr. A. Papadopoulos (now Metropolitan of Athens).

⁴Lord Dickinson, of Painswick, and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, of Germany.

⁵The story of Stockholm itself has been fully told, and the reader may be referred to such volumes as: *The Stockholm Conference, 1925*, edited by G. K. A. Bell, Oxford University Press, 1926; *Life and Work*, by Edward Shillito, Longmans, Green & Co., 1926; *Die Stockholmer Bewegung*, Adolf Deissmann, 1927, Furche-Verlag, Berlin; *Vers L'Union des Eglises*, Henri Monnier, Fischbacher, 1926; and many other books. The most complete is *Die Stockholmer Weltkirchenkonferenz*, Adolf Deissmann, Furche-Verlag, 1926.

in London. Gratitude is likewise expressed to his long-time associates: Miss Antonia H. Froendt and Miss Genevieve Dayton, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication. Perhaps the best apologia for this volume which the writer can make, is that he finds himself to be the only living officer of the original committee appointed in Geneva, in 1920, to prepare for the Stockholm Conference.⁶

The laws of growth are the same from generation to generation, and it is hoped that a historical study may be of help to those entrusted to carry out the more complete unification of "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order," proposed in 1937 at the conferences in Oxford and Edinburgh, as well as supplying a page of history which has never been fully and correctly written.⁷ In recording it, moralizing will be avoided, and objectivity sustained, as far as may be humanly possible.

C. S. M.

*Prepared at Oxford and London,
July-September, 1937.*

⁶ Provisional General Secretary.

⁷ Students desiring to study the progress of Christian Unity in all its aspects are referred to the Bibliography of 2,000 volumes by Auguste Senaud, published by the World's Committee of Y. M. C. A.'s, Geneva, 1937.

While two great ecumenical movements have moved in parallel lines and have interacted upon one another, the road to Stockholm from 1905 to 1925 is clearly demarcated from that which led to Lausanne in 1927 and Edinburgh in 1937. One was concerned with practical issues of life, while the other has dealt with the more abstract problems of confessions of faith. That they would ultimately meet was inevitable, however, and we may well hope that their first intimate association in the united service of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in 1937, is an augury of more complete "reunion."

I

FORECASTS OF FAITH

EARLY APPROACHES TO THE ECUMENICAL IDEA

HISTORY is elusive; many of its causes and currents do not reveal themselves to contemporaneous writers. Hence it is that the lapse of a half century after a great event has been regarded by some historians¹ as necessary for its narration in correct and ample perspective.

It is, however, essential that someone shall be the drudge who keeps the "minutes" of the meeting, transcribes and preserves them, if only for the sake of future and adequate interpretation, upon a basis factually secure. Indeed, the writer has not found it a simple task to extricate and rescue from dust-laden files the records of the early beginnings of the Ecumenical Movement which has just reached a climax at Oxford and Edinburgh. Let us, therefore, endeavour at least to assure for future historians those actual happenings on the short distances which are essential to the long view.

FOREIGN MISSIONS AND BIBLE CIRCULATION

Just when and where any such movement may be said to have originated is not easy to determine. The

¹ As illustrated by Carlyle's *French Revolution*.

historians of the World War differ considerably in their starting points of that tremendous crisis.² Protestantism, in particular, as Professor John T. McNeill so persistently and persuasively contends, has always been "conciliar" in principle and often, throughout history, in practice, in spite of its divisions and diversities.³

The movement toward inter-church service, of which the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work may be said to be the outcome, and the largest expression, has roots that go back into the early part of the nineteenth century. The idea which underlies it has moved on in evolutionary cycles, with both forward and backward sweeps.⁴

Among the earliest relations that might almost be termed ecumenical were those established between the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, the latter of which was organized in 1816. The British society was from the beginning more than an approach to a world organization. Foreign missionary problems occasioned approaches to ecumenism, when, in 1811, Adoniram Judson went from the United States to London to confer with the London Missionary Society. Many similar examples might be cited, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, but there was no coherent movement until that time; there were only a few lone voices.

²In Berlin, in 1915, when the author raised this question, he was assured by one of the German churchmen that it was when the Turks took Constantinople in 1453.

³*Unitive Protestantism*, John T. McNeill, Abingdon Press, 1930.

⁴*Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, Charles S. Macfarland; Macmillan, 1933.

14 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

THE WORLD'S EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

One of the first things that any organization of large proportions should do is to elect a historian.⁵ No adequate history of the Evangelical Alliance appears to have been written, although the bound records of its great ecumenical councils constitute a full five-foot shelf.⁶ Even a cursory survey of them makes it clear that modern ecumenical leaders could learn lessons from them.

"Ecumenism," in any large international sense, like all such great ideals, thus began in persons and groups rather than in official church bodies, and its earliest expression in any real amplitude was in the Evangelical Alliance.⁷ The first meeting of the Alliance in London, in 1846, was attended by members from several nations, including the United States. Its proposal to exclude slave-holders, and the Civil War delayed its organization in the United States until 1867. Meanwhile, conferences ecumenical in character were held in London in 1851, Berlin in 1857, and Geneva in 1861, all of which were attended by Americans. Such a meeting was to have been held in New York in 1869, but the war between France and Germany caused its postponement until 1873.

Among the values of the knowledge of history which organizational administrators so often neglect is that history so constantly repeats itself. Some of these

⁵ The average administrative "secretary" tends to start his record of the movement into which he enters with either his own election or with the first meeting he attended, and it is fortunate if his private secretary does not "clean out" the "old" files.

⁶ Happily the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has preserved them.

⁷ *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy.*

gatherings, three-quarters of a century ago, according to the records, were more imposing and animated, and attracted more attention on the part of the public, if not indeed of pastors and churches, than those of today. To the extent to which they were geographically world-representative of the Protestant constituency, they went, perhaps, beyond Stockholm or Oxford, in that foreign mission nations were more largely represented. Laymen appear to have exercised rather more leadership.

In view of the need felt and expressed at Stockholm in 1925, and Oxford in 1937, of a background of theology, or at least of defined faith, for "Life and Work," it is of interest to recall that the Evangelical Alliance drew up a statement of faith amounting almost to a creed. There are several analogies by which it may be said that this body anticipated Oxford. In 1870 the American branch, in response to an appeal from Swiss churchmen, sent messengers of outstanding influence to Europe to look into the "persecution" of Protestants in the Baltic States.

The meeting in New York in 1873, with an attendance of about one thousand, was as impressive as Stockholm or Oxford in personnel from Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Turkey, Holland, Italy, Greece, Canada, and five other British provinces, and included foreign missionaries from the Near and Far East and South Africa.⁸ The meeting at Basle in 1879 and the Jubilee in London in

⁸ The volume of proceedings, of eight hundred pages, should be consulted by all students of ecumenism.

16 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

1896 almost seemed to promise a substantial Christian unity. American delegates attended all these gatherings, as well as the meeting in the heart of *Italy*, at Florence, in 1891, and it should be remembered that travel was not a simple matter in those days. Likewise, the problem of language was more difficult than it is today.

Space does not permit full discussion as to why this great movement was eclipsed.⁹ The Alliance in the United States was a vigorous body until the early part of the present century and, strangely enough in the light of Oxford, one of the causes, if not a primary cause, of its decline was its conservatism regarding the national social ideals of its great prophet and secretary, Josiah Strong. Its international outlook is revealed, however, in its agitation for permanent arbitration treaties between Great Britain and the United States, in 1897.¹⁰

Probably one main cause of the decline of the Evangelical Alliance was a growing sense of the need of imparting its sense of unity to the church bodies. Indeed, among the organizers of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America were the men who had been most effectively useful in the Alliance

⁹There are still branches in some European countries. The British organization is known as the "World's Evangelical Alliance, British Branch." The United States branch still maintains a legal existence and administers a small fund. Its practical service was, by common consent, taken over by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

¹⁰The Federal Council of Churches has taken over not only the social interests on which it divided, but also those of an international nature. For example, one of the earliest actions of the Council, in 1909, was a protest against Belgian administration in the Congo.

and there never was any serious friction between the two bodies. The transition came about naturally. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred in continental Europe, as we shall see. Had the rather tenuous world organization of the Alliance been of a more substantial nature, the course of ecumenical Christianity might have been very different. How far this failure may be due to the fact that Josiah Strong was born out of due time may, at least, be conjectured. Dr. Strong was, in his day, an outstanding prophet of just the programme enunciated at Stockholm and amplified at Oxford.

THE IDEALS OF JOSIAH STRONG

A review of Dr. Strong's classic volumes reveals prophetic utterances on Christian co-operation from the very beginning. His first, and for a long time, his best known volume, *Our Country* (1885), while concerned with social, economic, and political issues, devoted its closing chapter to the responsibility of the churches for the Christianizing of wealth. Shortly after the first edition, Dr. Strong became (1886) the General Secretary of the American Branch of the Evangelical Alliance, and it was in this enlarged relationship that he issued his second great classic, *The New Era* (1893). In this volume appears what is probably the first direct approach to any comprehensive analysis of the bearing of Christian co-operation upon the conditions disclosed in the previous volume. He reveals "the wicked waste of men and means" all over the nation through sectarian competition and ri-

18 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

valry. The scope of Dr. Strong's knowledge of history and of the world conditions of his day was probably beyond that of any man of his time, and it is doubtful whether there have been, since his, any volumes equalling his completeness of analysis in these respects. As one reads them *seriatim* one discovers his pre-eminent ability to keep up with the rapid changes that were taking place.

Dr. Strong's address at the Interchurch Conference on Federation, in 1905,¹¹ was in part as follows:

"There is a Christian unity which does not need to be achieved, because it already exists. It is older than the divisions of Protestantism; it is as old as the parable of the Vine and its branches. The Church is one, not as the seven branches of the golden candlestick were one—mechanically—but as the body and its members are one—vitality. The essential unity, the spiritual oneness of the universal Church, is always recognized by such a body as this, and it is none the less real to us because it is invisible. But ought not this essential and inward unity to find some more effective and visible expression?

"Evidently the Master desired it, because He prayed for a unity that would be obvious to the world, and, seeing which, the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. Possibly we sometimes dwell upon our essential unity in order to salve our consciences for our sectarian rivalry, our lack of oneness before the world. Is it not possible so to recognize our oneness and so to manifest it as in good measure to remove sectarian rivalry and the shame of it, and correspondingly increase the practical efficiency of the Church?

"In the absence of an infallible test, there are three possible tests of varying value, the application of which gives us three concentric circles of fellowship having different

¹¹ The body which instituted the Federal Council.

diameters. The smallest circle includes those who believe as we believe. This has been, and still is, by far the most common test. This creedal basis of fellowship assumes that common character may be inferred from a common belief. And while it is true that Christians hold certain cardinal beliefs in common, there are multitudes in the world who hold these same beliefs who yet give no evidence of having had any spiritual experience, with whom, therefore, we can have no sense of spiritual oneness. The next larger circle of religious fellowship is that of common feeling. As Wesley said: 'We cannot all think alike, but may we not all love alike?' The great creeds of Christendom are divisive, but its great hymns are unifying: because they are not theological but devotional, expressing the oneness of feeling which comes from oneness of experience. The third circle, which is one of purpose, of action, is not only more inclusive, but more true as a basis of fellowship, because it is more truly indicative of character. A man's creed is not decisive, nor yet a man's feelings. It is his will which constitutes him a moral being, and it is the character of the will which makes the character of the man."

Josiah Strong differed from most other socially minded churchmen. Their emphasis was on the socializing of the Christian Gospel. Dr. Strong's approach was farther reaching and more fundamental. He looked toward *the Christianizing of the social order*. He gave a new meaning to the terms "Kingdom" and "Kingdom of God," which appear and reappear so often on his lips. He was not primarily concerned with the practical administration of social Christianity by the Church. In all his surveys and analyses he assumes Christianity as the ultimate moral force in society and the Church as the responsible agency for the fulfillment of his prophecies. His dis-

20 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

cussions of the relation of Church and State are by no means irrelevant to our present study of this world-wide problem.

While the Evangelical Alliance was not ready to advance with this administrative leader, he led his associates in America along part of the way. Among them were men who not long after developed the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council. No such impression, however, appears to have been made abroad. The prophet's vision went far beyond his voice.

JOSIAH STRONG'S PROPHECIES

Not long before his death, Dr. Strong published his last volumes: *Our World*, shortly preceding the Constance Conference of 1914. As in *The New Era*, he prophesies disasters that are inevitable unless there is a new "world ideal." That ideal is pretty nearly identical with the message issued at Stockholm in 1925.¹² The Evangelical Alliance leaders, with the exception of some in the United States, appear not to have seen it, and the ecumenical movement was halted, to await the fulfillment of Josiah Strong's solemn prophecies.

AN EARLY PLAN FOR AN ECUMENICAL BODY

We have a striking example of the repetitions and reproductions of history in a volume, first issued in

¹² The manuscript of a Memorial Biography of Josiah Strong by the late Nathaniel M. Pratt is being edited by Charles S. Macfarland. It throws considerable light on the subject of this chapter.

1838, by Samuel S. Schmucker, of Gettysburg Theological Seminary.¹⁸ It ran into several editions and led to the organization of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Union.

In 1846 Dr. Schmucker and several associates prepared an overture to the evangelical denominations in the United States which envisaged *an ultimate world organization* and referred to similar proposals which had appeared in Europe. In reading its statement of fundamental principles and suggested procedures one might think that one was attending a meeting of the so-called "Committee of Thirty-five" in 1937, planning for the unity of Life and Work and Faith and Order.

In anticipation of the meeting of the world's Evangelical Alliance in New York in 1873, Dr. Schmucker re-issued his volume in 1870, adding a "Modified Plan for the Reunion of All Evangelical Churches." The modification was made because the original plan had "requisitions deemed too elevated for the existing state of the Church." Dr. Schmucker's idea was to unite an incipient Council of Evangelical Denominations which had met in 1869 with the American Branch of the Evangelical Alliance and then proceed to develop a new World's Evangelical Alliance, *constituted by the church bodies*. The various creeds should be untouched, but be the basis of a common creed, based on that of the Apostles. This "United Protestant Apostolical Confession" included articles on liberty of conscience and on relations to civil government. Dr.

¹⁸ *The True Unity of Christ's Church.*

22 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Schmucker's purpose was to transform the Evangelical Alliance, with all its objectives in social reform, into an official council, on a confessional basis.

While there was much in these proposals that anticipated Oxford and Edinburgh, there were, of course, great differences in perspective and objective. Social service was that of philanthropy and reform and the basic confession was that of the orthodoxy of that day. The movements for union were then led by evangelical churchmen, had slight association with Anglicans, none with the Eastern churches, were strictly Protestant and to some extent anti-Roman Catholic. Nevertheless there is much in this long-out-of-print document worthy of study today. As we have seen, Dr. Schmucker's dream failed to be realized, although, in general, it had the sympathy of many of his associates, one of whom, Philip Schaff, went to Europe for conference in preparing for the great meeting of 1873. We see no little analogy with modern conditions in the records of the New York conference. The subjects included the State of Religion, Christianity and Its Foes, Family Life, Education, Christianity and Civil Government, and Christianity and Social Reforms. Missions had a large place and were at that time always included in any ecumenical plan.

THE IDEA ASSUMES NEW FORMS

INTERDENOMINATIONAL, UNDENOMINATIONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL ECUMENICAL BODIES

There is an indestructibility of great movements in human life, as in matter. The tide of ecumenical Christianity created by the Evangelical Alliance sub-

sided for perhaps two decades. In the meantime, however, other disconnected streams had been gathering from sources that had been opening up.¹⁴

The first World's Sunday School Convention was held in London in 1889 and has been periodically followed. The World's Christian Endeavor Union was organized in 1895. The Bible societies continued their co-operative relations. The world-wide relations of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations were of significant influence. In view of the later appearance of leadership in Sweden, it is of interest to note that Vadstena was the birthplace of the World's Student Christian Federation. While these movements were diffused, there is no doubt that they revived or continued the spirit of unity. Such bodies as the Salvation Army, the Federation of Men's Brotherhoods, the American and Foreign Christian Union, the American McAll Association and others were developing the friendship and understanding essential to the whole movement.

The denominational bodies, including those of the United States, have nearly all had world-wide relations in such organizations as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System; the Baptist World Alliance; the Lutheran World Convention; the Ecumenical Methodist Conference; the International Congregational Council; the Lambeth Conference and other world organizations meeting ecu-

¹⁴ *International Christian Movements*, Charles S. Macfarland; Revell, 1925. Translated by Adolf Keller, *Internationalen Christlichen Bewegungen*, Furche-Verlag, Berlin, 1925.

24 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

menically from time to time.¹⁵ How far, however, these have retarded rather than furthered genuine unity may be a question. In some instances they have been helpful, largely because of the identity of personnel in the denominational and the interdenominational bodies and movements. In other cases the supposed interests of sectarian unity becloud the larger vision. One might raise the question as to why the leaders of these ecumenical groups did not find their way together and become the originators of an inclusive body. They were systems moving within their own orbits and were but partially entitled to their ecumenical designations. But it should be added that they did, in some measure, contribute to the later development of the World Conference on Faith and Order.¹⁶

The early co-operation in Foreign Missions was also continued. World conferences were held, one in New York in 1854; another in London that year. In 1888 the centenary of modern Protestant missions was observed; the meeting in London included British, continental, colonial and American societies. In 1900 the "Ecumenical Missionary Conference" in New York brought together representatives of forty-eight countries. The culmination of this movement was the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, which was, we believe, the first that attempted to confine its attendance to official delegates. Thus the movement initiated largely, as in the Evangelical Alliance, by individual Christians or by detached bodies, began to assume

¹⁵ *International Christian Movements.*

¹⁶ It may be wise to take these bodies into account in all future ecumenical plans.

ecclesiastical characteristics and relations. In continental Europe, foreign missions interests have long been interdenominational and organizationally dissociated from the ecclesiastical church bodies.

Moving along with the ecumenical stream was the federative spirit among denominations, in several countries. Protestant Home Missions have long been interdenominational on the European continent. In Great Britain there was the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches. The French Protestant Federation was organized in 1905 and the Federal Council in America, 1905-1908. For the most part, however, it has been the reflex influence of such gatherings as Geneva in 1920, the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid in 1922, and Stockholm, 1925, that has led to national federation.

"LIFE AND WORK" AND "FAITH AND ORDER"

The first efforts toward the development of ecumenical relations on the part of the churches as distinctively ecclesiastical bodies was, however, in the realm of doctrine and polity. The World Conference on Faith and Order had its beginnings earlier than the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, although the preparatory meetings for both Lausanne and Stockholm were held in Geneva in 1920. This order was reversed in the world conferences, at Stockholm in 1925, and at Lausanne in 1927. These two movements have constantly reacted upon each other, to the benefit of both, due in part to a considerable identity in personnel. There is a striking difference,

26 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

however, in their histories. The World Conference on Faith and Order, whose problems were internal, pursued the more even tenor of its way, dealing with traditions of the past, and was but moderately influenced or disturbed by the oscillations of contemporary social life. The Universal Christian Council was seeking to find its path in the bewildering labyrinth of political and social strife, with ever changing conditions whose needs it was seeking to meet.

The early approaches to what actually came to pass at Stockholm are exceedingly intricate, and are largely matters of personal history. While the Universal Christian Conference was ultimately brought into being by the War, its story cannot be fully told without going back of 1914, as we think will become clear. And, as is always the case, we are led back to a few prophetic spirits and men of faith. Whatever may have been the permeative influences of the movements that have been described, that which culminated in 1925 had its own definite beginning. As the reader pursues the devious ways, detours and cross passages of the more immediate road to Stockholm, with occasional streams that had to be forded, and witnesses the relative few who constantly saw ahead with the eye of faith, he will not wonder that nearly a century elapsed between the first meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 and the conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937. And if the present larger proposals for world Christian solidarity are carried out, the century will be at least about completed. Let us consider it as an illustration of the divine law of com-

pensation coming out of the War and, above all, let it teach its lesson to the Christian churches.

WAYMARKS ON THE ROAD TO STOCKHOLM

Briefly summarized, the steps that led to Stockholm, thence to Oxford and Edinburgh and to the culminating proposal for a World Council, were as follows:

1. Interchanges of churchmen of Great Britain and Germany, 1907-1910;
2. Proposals for the inclusion of the churches of the United States, through the Federal Council, in a tri-national conference, 1911;
3. A call for a conference of European Churches from the Swiss Conference of Churches, 1914;
4. The Church Peace Conference at Constance, Germany, and the organization of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, 1914;
5. A message, prepared by Archbishop Nathan Soderblom, of Upsala, signed by various churchmen of continental Europe and the United States, 1914;
6. Conferences of churchmen in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France and Great Britain, with a representative of the Federal Council, 1915-1916;
7. Conference efforts on the part of Archbishop Soderblom and other Scandinavian bishops, 1917-1918;
8. The meeting of the World Alliance at Oud Wassenaer, The Hague, 1919;
9. The conference at Geneva, which instituted the

- "Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work" (the original designation), 1920;
10. The organization of the Central Bureau for Relief of the Evangelical Churches of Europe (now the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid) at the Bethesda Conference in Copenhagen, 1922;
 11. The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm, 1925.¹⁷

While the reader may not always find it easy to follow, he will discover a straight highway to Stockholm, if he keeps the objective clearly in mind. Great movements, such as that which we are attempting to describe, are expressive of spiritual ideals. Just as "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and we hear "the sound thereof," but cannot tell "whence it cometh and whither it goeth," so is every movement "that is born of the Spirit." Later prophets, who knew little of Samuel Schmucker and the Evangelical Alliance, were not conscious that they were agents in a historic process and little dreamed of what was to eventuate in 1937 at Oxford and Edinburgh as the result of their work and prayer and faith.

¹⁷ The transformation of the "Continuation Committee" of this Conference into the Universal Christian *Council* for Life and Work took place at Chexbres, Switzerland, in 1930, this being the body that called the Conference on Church, Community and State at Oxford in 1937.

II

CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES

FEAR OF WAR LEADS TO A NEW APPROACH

IN THE cyclic process of evolution, we often discover that events create movements. It took a crisis and a concrete, living objective to awaken the quiescent spirit of the Evangelical Alliance. Had there been Barthians in those days, we may suppose that some of them would have been content to declare that man could do nothing. There were, however, a few prophetic spirits who felt that men, looking to divine guidance, should try to do what they could.

IN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY

During recent years, succeeding the War, it has been noticeable that some political leaders have expressed more faith in the Church than its own leaders have always done. It is a happy coincidence when such statesmen are themselves also Christians. Were we called upon to name the men who started the train of event and organization which culminated first at Stockholm, and later at Oxford, first place might well be given to two members of the British Parliament, Willoughby Dickinson¹ and J. Allen Baker, the former an Anglican, the latter a Quaker. Both were

¹ Later Sir Willoughby, and now Lord Dickinson of Painswick.

80 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

men of political and spiritual vision, who also knew how to take action. While nations and peoples were blithely oblivious of the signs of the times, and while their fellow-diplomats seemed to be content with "muddling through," these men saw deeply and with far vision. They saw that the spirit of the nations of the world was all wrong, and they asked themselves: "What can the churches do to set it right?"

Special manifestations of the Spirit of God are never confined to any one man, or group, or to any one place. There were Christians in Germany who similarly sensed the danger, one a leader in its industrial life, the other a young pastor just entering his twenties: F. A. Spiecker and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze.² Just how these men came to discover one another and get together we do not know, but when they did they started a movement which has gone far and has yet far to go. Out of the fear of war emerged the sense of spiritual unity.

As early as 1907 these churchmen perceived the danger in the strained relationships between Germany and Great Britain. In the hope that increased personal contacts might lead to a better national understanding, they arranged an exchange of visits between groups of British and German pastors and laymen.³ In 1908 one hundred and thirty Germans, of Lutheran,

²History is replete with ironies. In view of the refusal of the German Government to permit representatives of the German Evangelical Church to attend the conference of the Universal Christian Council at Oxford, it is of interest to recall that that body had one of its roots in Germany.

³Two large illustrated volumes, both in English and German, describe this effort.

Reformed, Roman Catholic, and "Free" Churches, came to Great Britain, and the next year a return visit was made to Germany. Out of this grew, in 1909, "The Churches' Council for Promoting Friendly Relations between Great Britain and Germany."⁴ Two journals were soon established: *The Peacemaker* (now *Goodwill*), fathered by Mr. Dickinson and edited by J. H. Rushbrooke, and *Die Eiche*, which is still edited by Dr. Siegmund-Schultze. As one recalls the cordial popular reception of this friendly interchange of pastors in both nations, it makes one wonder how they could have been so soon at war.

AMERICA CHIMES IN

The idea that the Church might have a mission in the prevention of war, beyond the mere preaching of the Gospel of peace to individual Christians, was gaining headway in America as well, gradually overcoming the sense of national isolation. The first resounding voice to proclaim the fact was that of a jurist. In 1905, at the Interchurch Conference on Federation, Chief Justice David J. Brewer said: "As against the call for battleships I invoke the action of a united church, and I am sure that a federation of all the churches will soon make it plain that as for this nation there must be no longer war nor a getting ready for

⁴ Among the participating Germans one notes such names as Harnack, Julius Richter, Court Preacher Ernst Dryander, Martin Rade, and the elder Von Bodelschwingh, whose son has been so deeply involved in the current Church and State conflict. British names include the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Randall Davidson), who often presided, Silvester Horne, Archibald Henderson, Robert F. Horton, Campbell Morgan, John Clifford, and such laymen as H. M. Asquith and Lord Robert Cecil.

32 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

war.”⁵ In this memorable address Justice Brewer went so far as to express the judgment that “united effort” on the part of the churches “would compel the government to take a higher position.” Likewise, when that conference had developed into the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in 1908, it was another layman and jurist, Henry Wade Rogers, who, as chairman of a committee on international relations, introduced the subject of world peace as one of the objectives of the Council. While the Federal Council was in process of organizing its administration in 1909-1910, several actions were taken which stressed the ideal of peace.⁶

Churchmen in Great Britain and Germany knew little or nothing about this, but soon they looked across the sea to America to seek reinforcements for the bulwark against war which they hoped to erect. When Mr. Baker and Pastor Siegmund-Schultze visited the United States in 1910, in the hope of awakening interest there, they found a hearty welcome at the Lake Mohonk Peace Conference which was just then in session. In the spring of 1911 that body made the peace programme of the churches the subject of a meeting which was attended by Mr. Baker, John Clifford, and the Bishop of Worcester. One American Christian who responded with enthusiasm as well as sympathy to the proposals made by these men was Frederick Lynch—till then a lone pulpit voice crying in the wilderness, exhorting the churches to whom any such

⁵ *Church Federation*, edited by E. B. Sanford; Revell, 1906.

⁶ *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*.

idea as a regular church department for the furtherance of peace through international justice and goodwill was as yet foreign.

The British and German messengers aroused no little interest among the men responsible for the newly founded Federal Council of Churches, who were looking for a programme on which the churches might unite. There was something impressive in the attitude and state of mind of these leaders from across the sea. Consequently, on the advice and urging of Dr. Lynch, the newly elected General Secretary of the Council made a reciprocal visit to London. While he was there, in 1911, conferring with Dr. F. B. Meyer, the Honorary Secretary of the Free Church Council, he met George Blum, a young German who was assisting Willoughby Dickinson. Mr. Blum revealed unexpected forebodings concerning the international situation, and urged the visitor from America to go at once to Berlin to meet Dr. F. A. Spiecker and Pastor Siegmund-Schultze, who had in the interim become Assistant Court Pastor. They more than confirmed Mr. Blum's fears and proposed⁷ the holding of a church peace conference of members from churches of the three nations. A hall suitable for it was selected. Shortly after, however, word came to the Federal Council from the German leaders that the conference must be deferred, because the unhappy speech of a British political leader had aroused both political and public resentment in Germany.⁸

⁷ This meeting was in the Royal Castle at Potsdam, whence war issued but three years later.

⁸ The tenseness of the situation in 1911 is strikingly illustrated

84 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

The chief result of this visit, so far as the United States was concerned, was the immediate creation of the Federal Council's Commission on Peace and Arbitration. Correspondence with Great Britain and Germany was continued, always with the proposed tri-nation conference in view.⁹

Events shape men perhaps oftener than men make history, but there is much truth in the adage that history is biography writ large. In this narrative the reader will find a succession of personalities that at times seems to overshadow the actual progress of events. Such is the pursuance of ideals through the contagion of personality.

THE FIRST CHURCH CONFERENCE FOR WORLD PEACE; CONSTANCE, 1914

At this point a new figure entered upon the scene—another layman—neutral in religion, but having faith in the churches. The Federal Council was a frail body, consisting mostly of a state of mind and ideals. Material resources were negligible, inadequate for its bare maintenance, and it looked quite visionary for its officers to think of international conferences. Dr. Frederick Lynch, the secretary of the Federal Council's Commission on Peace and Arbitration, determined to confer on the subject with Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

In 1913, Mr. Carnegie attended the Kaiser's Jubilee in Berlin. He was deeply impressed by the service of

by correspondence between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Adolf Harnack, described in *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, G. K. A. Bell; Oxford University Press, 1935.

⁹ *Across the Years*, Charles S. Macfarland; Macmillan, 1936.

the committee on friendly relations between Germany and Great Britain, and, in conversations with Mr. Baker and Pastor Siegmund-Schultze, expressed his willingness to aid the churches in a peace movement. Meanwhile, Dr. Lynch, who was a personal friend of Mr. Carnegie, had formulated a plan to lay before him. On the advice of the Rev. William P. Merrill (Mrs. Carnegie's pastor) and others, Mr. Carnegie endowed the Church Peace Union, of which, at his request and also by common consent, Dr. Lynch became the secretary.

The Church Peace Union, with the co-operation of the Federal Council,¹⁰ at once took up the original conference idea and enlarged it to wider proportions. Thus came about the first attempt by churchmen of modern times to meet a basic problem of Church and State. It was no simple task to accomplish a proposal so new among churchmen who had previously had but slight relationship, and when the administrative agencies were so far apart as London and New York. At this point Switzerland, personified by Prof. Louis Emery, came into the picture.¹¹ In May, 1914, a preparatory meeting of British, German and Swiss leaders was held in London and succeeded in selecting representative European delegates for the proposed conference.

The conference itself convened at Constance, Germany, in a hotel which had been a Dominican monas-

¹⁰ Most of the American delegates were named or approved by the Federal Council's Administrative Committee, by request of the Church Peace Union.

¹¹ See page 39.

86 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

tery—the very one where five hundred years before another Council of Constance had condemned John Huss. Of the one hundred and fifty-three delegates, only about eighty-five reached Constance. Those who got there came from Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Bulgaria, and the United States.¹² Delegates from Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Belgium failed to arrive. Railroad trains were halted and turned back at the frontiers—the World War had begun.¹³

The conference met on the very day war was declared, August 1. A friendly letter was received from the Archbishop of Canterbury. A message was addressed by the meeting to all rulers and statesmen. Members who afterwards reached London met again, named an international committee and gave the continuing body its name: "The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches."

A WORLD ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP SURVIVES THE WAR

There was some doubt as to whether this "rump" meeting should take official action, but it was clearly

¹² Of the group that met at Constance there were present at Oxford in 1937: Willoughby Dickinson, of England; Elie Gounelle and Jules Jesequel, of France; Siegmund-Schultze, of Germany; William P. Merrill and Charles S. Macfarland, of the United States. In fact, only four or five of the originators and about twenty of the appointed delegates are now living. One of the delegates was Robert H. Gardiner, the pioneer of the World Conference on Faith and Order.

¹³ The writer has found no document recording just who actually got to Constance. Two American delegates, Dr. Rivington D. Lord and Dr. Walter Laidlaw, were arrested in Germany and confined in military prisons.

providential that it did. As we shall see later on, this procedure bridged over the war period and made immediate post-war action possible. The World Alliance maintained relationships, sent its messengers to and fro, organized councils in several countries, and even held an official meeting during the conflict. Extended work was carried on in behalf of prisoners of war and suffering civilians, mainly by members in Great Britain and Germany, during the entire period. The Fellowship of Reconciliation was organized, largely by the late Henry Hodgkin, who was a unique example of courage and love in the midst of an atmosphere of hostility and hate.

The ideals of the Alliance were stated in lofty terms: "The influence of Christians over the settlement at the conclusion of the war will inevitably be affected by their attitude during the war. By using their power—to assuage feelings of animosity and ill-will; to encourage prayer for enemies and care for their well-being; to refute calumnies which inflame passion; to allay bitterness by making known generous actions on the part of foes as well as on the part of friends; to aid helpless and innocent aliens when in difficulties; to keep alive the friendly relations which may have existed before the war—by so acting they will do much to facilitate the task of the nations when they come together to discuss the terms of peace." (How unhappy a contrast, however, to what happened at Versailles!)

One can hardly conceive of finer examples of faith than those of this little group, endeavouring to preserve

38 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Christian ideals in the midst of strife and carnage. Some of them suffered for it in their own nations, both in mind and body. Moreover, the original idea of bringing the churches into council persisted and personal visits were made at a time when governments were by no means sympathetic towards giving passports. In August, 1915, a conference of the International Committee of the World Alliance was held for three days at Berne.¹⁴ It was reported that ten national councils had been formed, including France and Germany. Among the questions considered was that of the resumption of the Constance conference as soon as war was over.

THE STREAM OF ECUMENISM WIDENS IN WAR-TIME

Again and again, in reviewing the growth of the ecumenical movement, it was borne in upon the author that no great idea ever arises in just one mind and no vast movement ever originates in one sole personality or group. The Spirit of God does not operate in that way. Many pathways converge upon any great highway of progress.

SWITZERLAND APPEARS

Coming back again to 1914, we find other forces and personalities engaged in the same measures that led to Constance in 1914 and thence to Geneva in

¹⁴ Among those present were: Willoughby Dickinson, Henry Hodgkin, and the Dean of Worcester (Dr. Ede), of Great Britain; Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and A. W. Schreiber, of Germany; Valdemar Ammundsen, of Denmark; J. A. Cramer, of Holland; J. Eugène Choisy, Louis Emery, and O. Herold, of Switzerland.

1920 and Stockholm in 1925. In many ways Switzerland was then a thermometer for the temperature and a barometer for the weather of continental Europe. Thus, slightly before 1914, another approach had come from that nation, which may be regarded as a waymark towards Stockholm. At a meeting of the Conference of the Swiss Evangelical Churches on June 10, 1913, Professor Louis Emery presented an overture from the Synod of Vaud¹⁵ calling for "a congress of the official delegates of the churches of Europe" to be held in that year, at Berne, thus anticipating the immediate proposal for the Constance meeting. It was unanimously adopted. In January, 1914, a letter was drafted by Professor Emery, signed by officials of the Swiss Conference and of the Synodical Commission of the National Church of the Canton of Vaud, which was conveyed to the evangelical church bodies of Europe "so far as their officials could be ascertained."¹⁶

This move caused Swiss representatives to be brought in to enlarge the previous British, German and American group at the preliminary meeting to Constance, held at London in May, 1914. At Constance it was reported that thirty-nine churches had

¹⁵ This Synod had passed a similar resolution in 1905 and repeated it in 1907.

¹⁶ From the minutes of the Swiss Conference. Evidently the church bodies of Europe were not well known to one another. The records of the American Federal Council contain reference to an action, in January, 1914, expressing warm appreciation "for the recent appeal issued by the Conference of the Evangelical Churches of Switzerland," and the officers were empowered "to assist in arranging for any international or other conference of the churches," thus making it evident that the Swiss conference sought American participation and support.

40 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

responded affirmatively to the Swiss appeal. According to Professor Emery's records, negative answers came from six churches in Germany, two in France, and from the German Evangelical Church Council. The Church of Sweden responded sympathetically but could not act officially until its next meeting in 1915.

In the meeting in London referred to above, it was decided that it would take too long to secure official delegates and thus the Swiss proposal merged with that which resulted in the historic conference at Constance.

SCANDINAVIA ENTERS ON THE SCENE

The official Scandinavian churches¹⁷ were not represented at Constance, but in November, 1914, a new and powerful voice and personality appeared. In view of the later leadership of Nathan Soederblom, Archbishop of Upsala, we may regard a message prepared by him as one of the most definite moves which ultimately led to the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work. Dr. Soederblom corresponded with a large number of churchmen, with the result that the following appeal received world-wide distribution:

"FOR PEACE AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP"

"The war is causing untold distress. Christ's body, the Church, suffers and mourns. Mankind in its need cries out, 'O Lord, how long?'"

"The tangle of underlying and active causes which accumulate in the course of time, and the proximate events which led to the breaking of peace, are left to history to unravel. God alone sees and judges the intents and thoughts of the heart.

¹⁷ There were two representatives from Baptist and Methodist churches, one from Sweden and one from Norway, respectively.

CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES 41

"We, servants of the Church, address to all those who have power or influence in the matter an earnest appeal seriously to keep peace before their eyes, in order that bloodshed soon may cease.

"We remind especially our Christian brethren of various nations that war cannot sunder the bond of internal union that Christ holds in us. Sure it is that every nation and every realm has its vocation in the divine plan of the world, and must, even in the face of heavy sacrifices, fulfill its duty, as far as the events indicate it and according to the dim conception of man. Our faith perceives what the eye cannot always see: the strife of nations must finally serve the dispensation of the Almighty, and all the faithful in Christ are one. Let us therefore call upon God that He may destroy hate and enmity, and in mercy ordain peace for us. His will be done!"

**AMERICA: THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES
OF CHRIST IN AMERICA,**

Shailer Mathews, President,

Charles Macfarland, Secretary,

Daniel Tuttle, Bishop of St. Louis, Presiding Bishop
of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

David Greer, Bishop of New York.

DANMARK: H. OSTENFELD, Sjaellands Biskop.

**FINLAND: GUSTAF JOHANSSON, Finlands Aerkebiskop,
Abo.**

HONGRIE: JOSEPH FERENCZ, Evêque, Kolozswar.

**NEDERLAND: DS. H. A. LEENMANS, predikant te Har-
lingen, Praeses van de Algemeene Synode van de
Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk;**

**Ds. J. A. HELWIG, predikant te Amsterdam, Voorzit-
ter van de Evangelisch-Luthersche Synode;**

**Ds. W. F. HEKKER, predikant te Amsterdam, Voor-
zitter van de Algemeene kerkelijke Vergadering
der Hersteld Evangelisch-Luthersche Kerk;**

42 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

DR. J. C. DE MOOR, 'sGravenhage, Praeses van de
Algemeene Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken
in Nederland en de Oud-Gereformeerde Kerken in
Oost-Friesland en Hannover.

NORGE: JENS TANDBERG, Kristiania Biskop.

SUISSE: PASTEUR G. RIS, Worb Bern, Président de la
Conférence des Eglises réformées de Suisse;

PASTEUR ARMAND DUCKERT, Genève, Modérateur
de la Compagnie des Pasteurs.

SVERIGE: NATHAN SOEDERBLOM, Aerkbiskop i Upsala.
November 27, 1914.

THE IDEAL OF AN ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE EMERGES

The Archbishop of Upsala, with the backing of his colleagues in the other Scandinavian countries, made an effort to secure ecclesiastically official sanction for this appeal, though not with much success. The signature from Hungary is that of the Unitarian bishop. In several nations the appeal seems to have been entirely ignored. A cablegram from the Archbishop to the General Secretary of the Federal Council states simply that a reply had come from Court Preacher Dryander of Germany (doubtless negative) and that the Archbishop of Canterbury had "expressed his feeling of Christian fellowship."¹⁸ From this time on, Nathan Soederblom gradually became a personal symbol of what was to be undertaken. He was a prolific letter writer and his correspondence with those whom he asked to become the signatories of the message awakened interest in other nations, including Holland, and doubtless was not without effect in many other

¹⁸ See page 67.

CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES 43

quarters, even though official assent was not secured. Dr. Soederblom knew that it was regarded as "a rather naïve good intention," but he reminds us that it helped to bring about a lasting fellowship.¹⁹

THE AMERICAN FEDERAL COUNCIL PURSUES THE QUEST

For the most part, church officials in the United States were not in touch with Europe and those of the denominational bodies having European relations were inclined to be partisan. Little attention was being paid to President Wilson's request for mental neutrality. As for any approach to our sister churches in Europe, it was hardly thought of, outside a very limited group. What was the use? The responsible officials of the Federal Council of Churches, however, having approved the Archbishop's call, felt that the message ought to be made the subject of deliberation and action, looking towards a world conference, whether earlier or later, and after much consultation and prayer, a representative of the Council went to Europe in December, 1915, to meet the church leaders in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. He was designated as a messenger of sympathy, with introductions from all the constituent bodies of the Federal Council. He was also to ascertain whether or not an informal conference might be held in the near future, and, on the supposition that the war could not last long, whether advance arrangements could be made for one to be composed of offi-

¹⁹ *Christian Fellowship*, Nathan Soederblom; Revell, 1923.

44 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

cially appointed members, as soon as peace should be declared.²⁰

The Federal Council's messenger found a warm and wide-spread response in Berlin; sympathy with reservation and doubt in Holland and Switzerland; appreciation in Paris, accompanied by complete lack of faith in German overtures; and in London a sympathetic attitude, with the judgment that conference between churchmen of the warring nations must wait until the war was over.²¹

On the return of this emissary, the Administrative Committee of the Council approved the proposal that preparations should be made for a post-war conference. Following this, in 1917 and 1918, efforts were made by churchmen of the United States and a few in Great Britain to induce peace measures, but to no avail.²²

In the latter part of 1916 renewed and more definite proposals for a post-war conference, to be of an ecumenical nature, came from three sources: the Swiss Protestant Federation, the Federal Council in America, and the Scandinavian bishops. At the quadrennial meeting of the Federal Council in St. Louis, in December, the General Secretary's report recommended preparations for such a conference, and an overture was presented from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the same effect, in response to which the Administrative Committee of the Council was authorized to take action. During this same year,

²⁰ President Woodrow Wilson was informed of this proposal and warmly approved it.

²¹ *Across the Years*.

²² *Across the Years*, and the *Records of the Federal Council, 1916*.

less definite messages came from several sources in Europe.

The meeting at St. Louis voted an expression of "its fraternal Christian sympathy with all suffering peoples and churches of Europe and Asia." A cabled message was widely distributed, extending "to the Christian brethren in countries now engaged in war its deepest sympathy, born of Christian faith and brotherhood . . . We pray that their tragic experiences may inspire us all to a deeper loyalty to the spiritual realities in which believers in Christ are one." Multitudinous and wide-spread correspondence was carried on during this period between the Federal Council and the European churchmen, in an endeavour to feel out the way towards the proposed conference.

SCANDINAVIAN BISHOPS PERSIST

Nathan Soederblom, impulsive by nature, a man with whom thought and action synchronized, was restive. In the fall of 1917, Archbishop Soederblom, Bishop Tandberg, of Norway, and Bishop Ostenfeld, of Denmark, invited churchmen of both neutral and warring nations to Upsala. German and Hungarian delegates accepted and were granted passports, but the proposed members from Great Britain and France were refused permission by their governments.²³ In December, however, a small group of churchmen

²³ Archbishop Soederblom wrote later (*Christian Fellowship*) that warmly sympathetic responses came from Court Preacher Dryander, of Germany, and the Archbishop of Poland. Professor Ingve Brilioth tells us that delegations were also expected from Constantinople and Athens.

46 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

from Holland, Switzerland, and the three Scandinavian countries met in Upsala, where the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was received in the cathedral. An appeal for Christian unity was signed: "Ostenfeld, Stoylen, Soederblom," and a memorandum was also drawn up on unity and social service, "for the guidance of the Church." Furthermore, this little gathering issued a formal call for a conference to be held at Christiania, Norway, April 14, 1918. The definition of the character of that conference and the subsequent course of events are set down in records, as reported to the Federal Council of Churches, as follows:

"It was proposed that this conference should avoid all political questions and confine itself to the consideration of the unity of Christians, the social task of Christianity and the settlement of international disputes through arbitration. It was intended that the conference should have representatives from belligerent as well as neutral nations and that it might include all belligerent countries. The Pope was even approached in regard to representation. The invitations were widely conveyed, included all the countries of Europe and the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek churches. The date was set ahead from time to time and it was finally abandoned.

"Meanwhile similar movements were under consideration in Switzerland, and there was some feeling that the proposed conference should be held in Switzerland. Moreover, some of the Swiss leaders were opposed to inviting representation from the Vatican.²⁴ The Swiss brethren interested proposed a Protestant conference. On the other hand, some of the

²⁴It should be noted that meanwhile, in January, 1918, there had been an international Roman Catholic conference at Zurich at which German representatives were present.

CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES 47

brethren in England concerned were favourable to extending the invitation to Rome.

"These proposals were considered in Great Britain, where there were some differences of opinion, some of the church leaders favouring a meeting which should include representatives of the German and Austrian churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury is said to have suggested two separate conferences at different times and was urgent that the Roman Catholic churches should be invited.²⁵

"The French Protestant churches replied to the proposal with a dignified message, declining to meet with the representatives of the churches of the nation that was invading their country and made a counter-proposal for a conference, to be held immediately, of the Protestant churches of the allied nations. The proposed conference was finally abandoned.

"The matter came up again, twice, however, through communications in 1918 from Bishops Soederblom, Ostensfeld, and Tandberg, stating that they were now prepared at the close of the war to issue the invitations to the conference in the near future. This was followed in November, 1918, by a communication from the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches, representing the Swedish Mission Society, the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church, signed by their various officers. This was an appeal to the churches of the belligerent countries to discard bitter feeling, to utter no harsh words and to renew now the spirit of reconciliation.

"A little later the Synodical Council of the Evangelical Church of Berne, Switzerland, invited all the Swiss Reformed Churches to sign a letter to be sent to the General Secretary of the Federal Council. This letter was to invite the Federal Council to take the initiative in calling a general conference of the Evangelical churches of the entire world, for the purpose, in the main, of reconciliation among Protestant Christians. This letter set forth the sufferings and

²⁵ See page 67.

48 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

the distress of the German Protestants and gave assurance that they repudiated the wrongdoings of their former government. To this proposal, however, the Geneva consistory responded that the proposal was premature and the Geneva consistory did not estimate the attitude of the German Protestants as being adequately contrite. It called attention to the fact that the world had received no intimation of any such contrition.

"Meanwhile the only word that came from the German churches was in the form of a cable from Professor Adolf Deissmann, sent jointly to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the General Secretary of the Federal Council, urging that protest be made against the terms of the armistice and calling for resumption of Christian relationships on the basis of the pronouncement of the Federal Council²⁶ at the beginning of the war. To this the Archbishop of Canterbury made reply, calling for evidence of the attitude of the German churches which would admit of such procedure.

"The Federal Council reviewed all of these proposals and recommended that correspondence be undertaken regarding the World Conference to be held 'whenever it appeared that it could be brought together successfully.' The Federal Council requested its delegation at the time in Europe to consider the question, as opportunity offered, with the representatives of the European churches whom they should meet. That delegation advised against any hasty attempt at such a conference, but expressed the judgment of the European representatives that the American Federal Council should continue its correspondence and conference on the matter, looking towards the summoning of the conference as soon as the way should be clear. There was the general feeling that such a world conference should be held, that it should be officially representative and not simply a voluntary meeting,

²⁶ In view of present wide-spread criticism of the attitude of church bodies during the war, it is of interest to record that this message was widely regarded as a genuinely Christian document.

CALAMITY AWAKENS SPIRITUAL FORCES 49

and that it should consider the whole range of Christian activities." ²⁷

The Swiss leaders appear, during this period, to have deferred to the Scandinavian bishops, but the idea was gaining ground, as evidenced by the organization, in 1917, of "The British Council for Promoting an International Christian Conference," under the presidency of Lord Parmoor. The secretary was Marian Ellis (now Lady Parmoor). This body, in September, 1917, proposed an "international, interdenominational conference" to be held at once, "to find a way of discharging our responsibility to Christendom." Such a gathering "might even develop into a permanent organ for expressing the mind of Christ upon great moral questions."

THE WORLD ALLIANCE SOLVES THE PROBLEM

The conference ideal and idea was in the air. How could it be brought down to earth? There is always great advantage to a body that is held together by a definite objective which can be grasped. Such a group can enlarge its ideal and secure action far more readily than a less coherent assemblage seeking to realize a more vague and general idea. We may well be grateful to the little nucleus of men in Europe, supported by the sympathy of the officials of the World Alliance and the Federal Council in the United States, who persisted in holding together with one specific aim while all this

²⁷ From a report and review by the General Secretary of the Federal Council in 1919.

50 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

correspondence was taking place. They offered the opportunity for action.²⁸

It was through the devotion of these men that the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches had held together, and from September 30th to October 4th, 1919, the Alliance met at Oud Wassenaer, The Hague. At this meeting thirteen nations were represented and four new and vital personalities entered on the scene: Adolf Deissmann, of Germany, the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Theodore Woods), Henry A. Atkinson, and Dr. G. K. A. Bell, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury (now Bishop of Chichester).²⁹ It was also the first appearance, in person, of Archbishop Soederblom.

Overtures came from the three main sources of the original proposals, the Swiss Protestant Federation, the Archbishop of Upsala, and the American Federal Council. Their recommendations were that this meeting secure such measures as would provide for a world conference, not simply of voluntary members to deal with the interests of peace, but officially constituted to consider all the mutual service and interests of the churches. Archbishop Soederblom outlined the purposes thus: to gain a common ideal of international brotherhood, social renewal, a common voice for con-

²⁸ We might as well name them: Willoughby Dickinson and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, supported, to be sure, by loyal associates, but not too many in number. The reader will surely see why we started these men at the beginning of the road to Stockholm.

²⁹ Of the members of the Oud Wassenaer meeting there were recorded as present at Oxford in 1937: Lord Dickinson, Siegmund-Schultze, the Bishop of Chichester, F. Klaveness, of Norway, Atkinson, and Macfarland.

science, by "an Ecumenical Council representing Christendom in a spiritual way."³⁰ According to the minutes of that meeting, Dr. Soederblom presented "a detailed proposal for an international Christian conference and 'an Ecumenical Church Council'." In fact, the Archbishop's plan was deemed slightly hierarchical, involving a council which to some looked almost papal.³¹

The representative of the Federal Council simply reported that that body had already set up a Committee on Ecumenical Conference and was prepared to co-operate in whatever enterprise might be undertaken.

The Swiss overture was as follows:

"We, the delegates of the Swiss Council, take the opportunity when Protestants of many countries are assembled, to give expression to the urgent necessity of uniting all Protestants.

"It is understood that the various churches maintain their full independence in the matter of constitution, doctrine, and worship. The proposed union aims at asserting the unity of all Protestants in the spirit of Christian love, protecting religious liberty wherever it is threatened,³² and making a way to the evangelical principles in the world by a common action."

The spokesman from Switzerland, Dean Herold, recommended that the Archbishop of Upsala and the General Secretary of the Federal Council should be asked to take the initial steps. That ended the specific proposals. There appeared to be no disposition to in-

³⁰ A report by Professor Ingve Brilioth.

³¹ See page 68.

³² An interesting premonition of the conference at Oxford, 1937.

52 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

introduce counter propositions, very likely because no one could think of any. At the moment it looked like a frail device, with the two chief consultants soon to be again four thousand miles apart. Dr. Soederblom at once suggested to his colleague that the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America might readily convene the ecumenical conference in 1920.³³ His associate quailed at the Archbishop's velocity. He was not sure that the Christians of the belligerent nations would react so speedily. Preparation and amelioration might be needed. Also he was inclined to defer to the Swiss Church Federation. As the result of several hours and periods of discussion, between these two men, it was decided to recommend to the members of the World Alliance that they simply approve the general ideal and name a detached committee charged to see that it was realized.

It may seem to contemporary readers that too much has been made of these early beginnings of what is now the well-defined and widely recognized ecumenical movement; that paragraphs have been devoted to meetings which could have been dismissed with a sentence; that too much space has been given to messages, reports, and overtures hither and yon. The author has felt, however, that this information should be set

³³ The Archbishop was even ready with a plan for the "Ecumenical Council" to be set up by the Conference. It would include, "without election," the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the See of Canterbury, the President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the President of the German Church Federation, with others to be elected. When asked which would be *summus episcopus*, the reply was "all together and each in rotation." The substance of this part of the long colloquy is given in *Christian Fellowship*.

forth in some detail, even at the risk of tediousness, because it not only shows how hesitating and yet determined were the first steps toward the great world conferences of Stockholm and Oxford, Lausanne and Edinburgh, but also because it exonerates the churches, at least in part, and many Christian leaders, of the accusation so frequently brought against them: that during the World War they were all swept away in the swift current of popular hysteria and rampant nationalism.

It is true that the churches in the warring countries by no means fully exerted their influence in the service of peace; but it is not true that they made *no* effort in that direction. Individuals and groups maintained friendly relations and correspondence with colleagues and co-religionists in hostile countries which their respective governments must have considered treasonable in effect if not in intent. As an additional instance to those already mentioned, one may well cite the unbroken relationship between the Reformed Church of Hungary and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It is also true that the churches were the first to stretch out the hand of reconciliation from country to country, and the irenic spirit which pervaded their international gatherings was wholly other than the one which prevailed around the "green table" at Brest-Litovsk, Versailles, the Trianon, and even at later post-war conferences.

III

THE WAY IS CHARTED

AN "ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE" PROMISES REALIZATION; GENEVA, 1920

THE meeting of the World Alliance in Oud Wassenaer readily voiced approval of "an ecumenical conference of the Christian communions to consider urgent practical tasks before the Church at this time." From this moment on, it may be noted, the word "ecumenical" came more and more constantly into use, as the original scope and composition of the proposed conference grew ever wider and more comprehensive. A committee consisting of the Archbishop of Upsala; Dean O. Herold, of the recently founded Swiss Protestant Federation, and the General Secretary of the American Federal Council was entrusted with future procedure, without further instruction, a commission of no little amplitude.¹

¹ A word should be added regarding the attitude of the World Alliance. It might have been tempted to resolve itself into the proposed conference. But its leaders saw the wisdom of more official action, over a larger area of objective, by ecclesiastically organized bodies, and graciously deferred to them. Later on, the World Alliance, through the generous action of the Church Peace Union, gave the services and talents of its secretary, Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, to the Universal Christian Conference, over a period of several years. From beginning to end the World Alliance, through its national groups, its international meetings, the considerable identity of its personnel with that of other bodies and the constant "circuit-riding" of Dr. Atkinson over the world, has been a sort of elder brother to the Universal Christian Council and a continuing influence in the development of the ecumenical idea.

This committee issued a message which was conveyed to the officials of the bodies most interested. It was stated that the proposal for a conference had been "for the past five years the subject of deep and constant thought, fraternal conference and correspondence, and earnest, fervent prayer." "It is the profound conviction of many minds that the different communions of Christendom are ready, at this hour, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to join hearts and hands in the prayerful consideration of common tasks and opportunities which press upon the heart and conscience of the Church and demand all her resources and her power." It was proposed that a preliminary committee assemble at Paris, which should "be authorized to prepare plans for such a conference."

The responses, which came to the author of this volume, were sympathetic enough, but not very definite. In fact, it must be admitted that the procedure thus far looked precipitate. Therefore the committee called a group of counsellors together in Paris, on November 17th, 1919. Dr. Ingve Brilioth and the Rev. A. O. T. Hellerstroem served as representatives of Archbishop Soederblom and of the churches of Norway and Denmark. Dr. Frederick Lynch represented the General Secretary of the Federal Council. The others present were: Bishop William F. Anderson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Dr. Henry A. Atkinson; Dr. Chauncey W. Goodrich, of the American Church in Paris; Dr. Fred B. Fisher, of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Prof. J. Eugène Choisy, of Switzerland; Pastor André Monod, of the French Protestant

56 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Federation, and Dean Herold, of Switzerland, who presided. Letters were read from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Upsala, the bishops of Copenhagen and Christiania and Professor Gummerus, of Finland. (From records found in the archives of Archbishop Soederblom, the only source discoverable.) It was the unanimous judgment of these counsellors that "Dr. Frederick Lynch be appointed a committee of one, with full power," to secure initiative action—another somewhat unusual commitment.² This action was undoubtedly taken, first, because it seemed evident that no time should be lost and second, because the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, by the existence of its Committee on Ecumenical Conference, appeared to provide the necessary mechanics. Dr. Brilioth, the counsellor from Sweden, doubtless represented Archbishop Soederblom when he said in his report that they "naturally" looked to America. It was fortunate that the proposal was to be submitted to a man with the contagious faith of Frederick Lynch.³

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL HELPS PREPARE THE WAY

The task itself loomed as large as the idea. Main

² In his volume, *Christian Fellowship*, Dr. Soederblom says that the Archbishop of Canterbury suggested "a committee of one for preparation."

³ Other considerations were in the background of the decision. By its war relief measures in 1915-16, its rebuilding of the French churches, and the relief for German women and children following the armistice, the Federal Council was in a mediating position. Moreover, relations of a deep personal nature had developed between American and continental churchmen during the preceding decade.

sources of vital interest were the Scandinavian and Swiss churches, the Federal Council, and the leaders of the World Alliance. The German churchmen were filled with resentment by the conditions of the armistice and the post-war blockade. Their French brethren were demanding evidence of German contrition. Little support was shown by Free churchmen in Great Britain, and practically none came from Anglican sources at this stage. As for the other countries of Europe, they were concerned with the rebuilding of their shattered forces, or as yet were stunned by the devastation wrought by war. It looked like an adventure of consummate faith. On the other hand, there were small groups of consecrated men in several nations, including France, Germany, and the United States, who, through mutual visitation during the war, had come into the deepest relations of understanding, confidence, and affection. In his characteristically fearless way, Dr. Lynch at once presented the enlarged proposal to the Federal Council. Correspondence was taken up with the church leaders in Europe most concerned, and eventually assurance was received that the action of the Council would be approved by common consent, whatever it might be.⁴ These ecclesiastical *pourparlers* required all the delicacy of touch demanded by similar moves in secular diplomacy.

⁴ Throughout all this time, it had been the clearly defined policy of the Federal Council not to assume responsibility unless requested, but to make apparent its readiness to co-operate and do whatever any group of the European churches might ask, provided general assent was assured.

58 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

As previously indicated, it had been the original idea of the Archbishop of Upsala, and of some of the Swiss churchmen, that the world conference should be called at once, to meet perhaps in 1920.⁵ It was decided, however, to defer the ultimate gathering and call immediately another preparatory conference. Later experience proved that this was a wise move.⁶

The Federal Council's Committee on Ecumenical Conference, in the early part of 1920, took the following action:

"VOTED: to recommend to the federated bodies of churches and similar joint committees or other joint bodies of the churches in the various nations, that a conference of their representatives be held in Geneva, in August, 1920; the purpose of this conference being to confer upon the calling of an ecumenical conference of church bodies to consider the urgent practical tasks of Christian life and service and the possibilities of world-wide co-operation in testimony and action;

"VOTED: that the constituent bodies of the Federal Council be requested to officially authorize the members of the Federal Council's Committee on Ecumenical Conference to represent them in that capacity."⁷

The Federal Council still faced not a few perplexities. To communicate with the multitude of denominations in so many countries would have caused years of delay. In only a few nations were there federations. In those where there was no federated body, individual

⁵ Archbishop Soederblom assumed this.

⁶ As it was, it took five years—1920 to 1925—after the initial conferences met, before the Stockholm meeting finally took place.

⁷ For the most part this action was approved by denominational officials.

church bodies were approached, and in several cases selected leaders secured common action, more or less by common consent.

THE "UNIVERSAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ON LIFE AND WORK" IS PROJECTED

The conference which met in Geneva, August 9-12, 1920, was known as "the preliminary meeting to consider a Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work." The initial convocation was opened by Dr. Nehemiah Boynton, of the Federal Council. Professor Eugène Choisy was selected to preside over the first regular session. Two outstanding figures of this historic meeting were the Archbishop of Upsala and Frederick Lynch, who contributed greatly to both its spirit and administration. The Metropolitan of Seleucia, the Archbishop of Nubia, and Professor Chr. Papadopoulos, of the Eastern Churches, were present as "fraternal visitors."⁸

In many respects the Geneva meeting was the most crucial of all—both of those previously and those subsequently held. The scars of war had by no means begun to heal and all too frequently the atmosphere of the sessions was charged with lightning. The French Protestant Federation presented a letter containing what we may call "reservations,"⁹ as the result of which the committee which was finally named to prepare the conference at Stockholm, included

⁸ These men are now, respectively—Archbishop of Thyateira and Exarch of the Patriarchate of Constantinople; Patriarch and Pope of Alexandria; Metropolitan of Athens.

⁹ Records of the Geneva meeting reprint this letter in full.

60 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

neither French nor German members "for the present." Happily, the ensuing discussion, while deeply grave, was conducted in a truly Christian spirit.

At times hesitation and even timidity had to be met, occasionally by ingenuity. For example, several members halted at the term "ecumenical conference." It loomed too large, especially to foreign missions officers. This was met by a suggestion from Archbishop Soederblom (who himself would doubtless have favoured a term of even greater amplitude, if there were one), the final term chosen being: "Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work," to which the Secretary was permitted to add: "it is hoped that this conference will become ecumenical."

In the midst of the discussion on this point, there was an unlooked for but gratifying interruption. The general feeling had been that the Eastern churchmen might not be ready at this time to assume responsibility for preparing a world conference, but that a committee might be appointed by the Geneva meeting to confer with them. Therefore no invitation had been sent to them on this occasion. Great was the surprise and deep the satisfaction when three of the Eastern Church leaders appeared and expressed a desire to visit the conference. Fortunately, Professor Neander, of Sweden, was equal to extending a welcome in Greek. The entrance of these friendly visitors, in their dignified ecclesiastical robes and their grave demeanour, was deeply impressive. Thus, in a very simple way, without preliminary diplomatic negotiations, the Orthodox churches took the historic step of coming together

to take counsel with Protestant churches, entering into a relationship which, from Geneva to Stockholm, deepened and grew ever closer, to the enrichment of both.

Just how far the Geneva gathering was a duly constituted, officially delegated body no one could tell, and no one inquired. Some came with denominational approval. Most of its members had, however, been either appointed or approved by church federations or by national or sectional bodies. Others were "co-opted." They numbered about one hundred and represented fifteen countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Jugoslavia, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.¹⁰ Whether or not they had been officially authorized, their actions met with the consent of their churches, *post facto*. Had any other course been pursued, no such meeting as that which eventuated at Stockholm could have been brought about for at least a decade. It should be added that as far as possible leading church officials had been informed in advance, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was personally interviewed by the writer and who expressed a feeling of sympathy and a desire to be kept informed. Interdenominational foreign missions agencies were represented by Fennell

¹⁰ It is of interest to note that among them were Bishop Charles H. Brent and Robert H. Gardiner, of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Among those who looked back to the earlier days were Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and Bishop Ostenfeld. A. W. Schreiber, of Germany, later became of unique service. Adolf Deissmann was detained by illness, but sent a warm message.

62 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

P. Turner, Secretary of the Committee of Reference and Counsel of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

THE CALL IS ISSUED

The Geneva Conference issued the following call for prayer:

"AN APPEAL FOR PRAYER"

"The members of this preliminary International Commission at Geneva, drawn together by a consciousness of the painful and urgent need of the world, and by a conviction that only the Gospel and spirit and leadership of Jesus Christ can meet that need, and that only a church united, consecrated, daring, and self-forgetful can form the body, through which this spirit may do His gracious and healing work—earnestly and solemnly appeal to Christians of every name and form, of every land and race, to pray now and continually for the coming of a fuller unity of spirit and of action in the entire Church of Christ throughout the world; for a readiness on the part of all Christians to make new ventures of faith, and to take more seriously the implications of the Gospel; for the deepening and broadening of love among all Christ's followers toward all men; for the elimination of all passion and prejudice, and the growth of peace and brotherhood; for clearer vision of the will of God and of the work of Christ in this day; and for all that may further the coming of His Kingdom.

"Especially do we ask our Fellow-Christians, everywhere, to pray for the success of the Conference which is to consider the place and duty of the Church of Christ, and the claims upon it of the Master and of mankind. The united and unceasing intercession of all Christians is asked, that, through this gathering of Christians from all the world, the Church may come to clear realization of its unity, its opportunity, and its responsibility; that the spirit of Christ may

fill and control His body, the Church; and that, through His mighty and gracious working, mankind may be led into the larger life which is in Him, and the whole creation, now groaning and travailing in pain, may be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

This message was sent by the American Federal Council to churches all over the world and awakened almost universally sympathetic responses from Protestant and, to a large extent, from Eastern churches and churchmen.

A Committee of Arrangements was appointed to prepare for the "Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work," with power to enlarge itself.¹¹ Once again, largely on faith, an effort to do what had not been done for centuries was entrusted to a small and widely separated group and, for the moment, to but a relatively few within that group.

Before resuming the narrative, we may appropri-

¹¹ The original committee was as follows: Rev. Peter Ainslie, Rev. Nehemiah Boynton, Rt. Rev. Charles H. Brent, Rev. Arthur J. Brown, Bishop James Cannon, Jr., Rev. Samuel H. Chester, Bishop John Hurst, Rev. Lauritz Larsen, Rev. Frederick Lynch, Rev. Charles S. Macfarland, Rev. William P. Merrill, Bishop John L. Nuelsen, U. S. A.; Rev. Gustav E. H. Aulen, Archbishop Nathan Soederblom, Sweden; Prof. J. Eugène Choisy, Rev. Adolf Keller, Switzerland; Rev. J. A. Cramer, Holland; Rev. Ernest Giampiccoli, Italy; Rev. Jens Gleditsch, Norway; Rev. J. A. MacClymont, Rev. John D. MacGilp, Scotland; Rev. Thomas Nightingale, England; Bishop H. Ostenfeld, Denmark; Bishop Alexander Raffay, Rev. A. Szabo, Hungary.

Provisional Chairman: Archbishop Nathan Soederblom.

Provisional General Secretaries: Charles S. Macfarland and Frederick Lynch.

Of these twenty-five men, not more than a dozen are known to be now living, and but four were registered as present at Oxford in 1937.

64 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

ately consider some of the cross-currents and some of the streams of influence which contributed to both the acceleration and the restraint of progress.

THE EASTERN CHURCHES ASSENT

One of the most striking phenomena of present-day Christianity is the emergence of the Orthodox churches of the East, from a thousand years of exclusiveness and isolation, into free and friendly relations with other churches. When the preparatory meeting in London in 1914 was selecting delegates for the Constance Conference, the idea of including the Eastern churchmen was considered, but without definite action resulting.¹² The three representative Eastern churchmen who were received as "friendly visitors" at Geneva, in 1920, came primarily on their own initiative.

Anglican leaders who have feared that Protestant solidarity would impair relations with these churches of the East have evidently overlooked certain significant facts. The Eastern delegates to the preparatory meeting for the World Conference on Faith and Order, also held at Geneva, in 1920, just after the preparatory meeting for Stockholm, went from the *latter* to the *former* gathering. They proposed, before proceeding to Faith and Order, that "a League of Churches should be established for their mutual co-operation in regard to the social and moral principles of Christendom." Thus, from the very beginning, these leaders were com-

¹² A confidential memorandum in the files of Lord Dickinson indicates that, later on, they might be invited to hold a similar conference and that ultimately a meeting of Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern churchmen might be possible.

mitted to the Universal Christian Conference ¹³ and to co-operation with the Protestant churches.

Many factors have entered into this situation, mainly the new development of understanding between Protestant and Orthodox leaders. The spirit developed by such manifestations of Christian fellowship as Near East Relief and other practical expressions of Christian sympathy ¹⁴ have had no little influence.

At Stockholm, the Eastern delegates contributed an irenic spirit and a sense of spiritual values and, one may add, a picturesque touch to the gathering. The sense of the vast constituency which they represented brought no little measure of strength.

APPROACHES TO ANGLICANISM

"Pray earnestly for the Archbishop of Canterbury," exhorted Nathan Soederblom one day in 1920, as he took leave of an American associate. And the Anglican leaders were the subjects of prayer and persuasion, from Oud Wassenaer in 1919 until Stockholm was reached.

¹³ The Eastern delegates at Lausanne, in 1927, reminded the World Conference on Faith and Order of this proposal and added: "the most that we can do now is to enter into co-operation with other churches in the social and moral sphere on a basis of Christian love."

¹⁴ The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in 1922, sent a messenger, the Rev. John S. Zelig, carrying relief funds to the Russian Church at the time of the famine, and in 1923 appointed a Committee on Relations with the Eastern Churches, of which Bishop Charles H. Brent was the chairman. This body, in co-operation with the American Office of the Central Bureau for Inter-Church Aid, made arrangements whereby orthodox students should come to American theological seminaries. Present at Oxford, as member of the Rumanian delegation, was the Rev. Florea Galdau, one of these orthodox students.

66 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Over a long period of years, Protestant approaches have been made to the Church of England, and on the other hand the Lambeth conferences have in turn issued what might be termed overtures to the Free churches.¹⁵

However, although entering freely and with great usefulness into co-operation with voluntary bodies, the Church of England had always been hesitant about approaches to any ecclesiastical relations, even in common matters of service. For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury reflected and counselled for eight months before accepting the invitation to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910.¹⁶

During the very year 1920, when the Universal Christian Conference was emerging at Geneva, the Lambeth Conference was evidently feeling its way towards a more liberal stand, along the path of Faith and Order. The Bishop of Chichester, Dr. G. K. A. Bell, has given us some interesting reminiscences of Dr. Randall T. Davidson, then Archbishop of Canterbury, in relation to the movements described in this volume, to which reference may appropriately be made. In January, 1916, following his conferences on the Continent, the representative of the Federal Council of Churches met Dr. Davidson and was shown his frank but gracious reply to the unhappy pronouncement of German churchmen in the early part of the war, addressed "to Evangelical Christians abroad."

¹⁵ One recalls the proposal initiated by Dr. Newman Smyth many years ago for Anglican ordination of Congregational ministers, and his pilgrimage to England in the interest of union.

¹⁶ *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, G. K. A. Bell; Oxford University Press, 1935.

The Archbishop intimated that this German document had not been without influence in his declination to sign the message prepared by Dr. Soederblom in 1914,¹⁷ although the main reason was probably that he felt the latter to be inopportune. Dr. Bell tells us that the Archbishop also regarded Dr. Soederblom's proposals for conferences at Upsala in 1917-1918 as untimely and expressed the judgment that any such meeting would need to include the Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches. His answer, therefore, was "temporizing." In response to the invitation to Upsala, in 1918, he expressed the feeling that such a conference should be deferred until peace was declared.

We also learn from Dr. Bell that upon the receipt of the second call for a conference in 1918, the Archbishop consulted with certain political leaders.¹⁸ Lord Lansdowne felt that the Church should consider it on its own merits. Balfour regarded it as a "blunder" for churchmen to try "to be politicians." Lord Cecil, on the contrary, regarded the effort as designed to permeate the body politic with Christianity. Asquith had no suggestions, but felt that the call should be responded to only if representatives of the Roman and Eastern churches did likewise. Later on in 1918, after the armistice, Dr. Davidson felt that no such confer-

¹⁷ See page 40.

¹⁸ Dr. Davidson's view of relations of Church and State is indicated by his reply to William T. Stead, in 1907, when urged to sign a manifesto which reflected invidiously upon "sovereigns, statesmen and diplomatists." He said that "practical action (by churches) must be guided by what statesmen declare to be possible for the nation's life, and the Church, as represented by the clergy, cannot take the place which ought to be occupied by statesmen."—*Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury.*

ence should be held while the States were negotiating, but only after peace should be concluded. This more or less hesitant attitude characterized Dr. Davidson's action, or lack of action, through all these years, almost up to the eve of Stockholm.

In this connection, however, we need to remember that "Free" churches are, indeed, freer than such a body as Anglicanism. They are not so deeply rooted in the past and its traditions. Their freedom is perhaps both an asset and a liability. Moreover, Dr. Davidson intimated that it might be embarrassing to attend a conference with non-Anglican churchmen in Geneva, while no similar policy had been found possible as yet in Great Britain. As Dr. Bell records,¹⁹ later (in 1921), Archbishop Soederblom interviewed Dr. Davidson in behalf of the coming conference at Stockholm. The story of the fencing match between the two primates is not without humour. Canterbury seems to have won, by his success in evading an answer to Upsala's insistent inquiry, but Dr. Bell tells us that afterwards Dr. Davidson rather emphatically expressed his disquietude concerning the outcome of the interview.

If the mental blue-print of the Archbishop of Upsala's plan for an "Ecumenical Council" was anything like what Dr. Soederblom outlined to the writer of this volume,²⁰ its progressive, not to say revolutionary, aspect might easily have disturbed a man of less conservative temperament than Dr. Davidson.

¹⁹ *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury.*

²⁰ Briefly outlined in *Christian Fellowship*.

Just where it would have left the Anglican primate's position was at least dubious. It is not known whether or not Dr. Soederblom mentioned the suggestion which he conveyed to some of his associates in the Stockholm Conference, that the headquarters of the continuing body after Stockholm might be in that city, but if he did, the Archbishop of Canterbury might well have been more disturbed.²¹ In this connection it should be recorded that Dr. Bell, undoubtedly with Dr. Davidson's knowledge and consent, kept in close touch with all that was going on.

In consulting the available correspondence, the following letter, relative to the Geneva meeting, comes the nearest to any commitment by the Archbishop during this preparatory period:

"Lambeth Palace, S. E.

"10th March, 1920.

"Dear Dr. Macfarland,

"I am greatly obliged to you for your letter of January 21st, with regard to the proposed Ecumenical Conference on moral and social questions: and I am much interested in the comments which you make and the points raised in your letter.

"I am glad to hear from you that the question of sending invitations to the Roman Catholic Church is one on which you and the Committee of the Federal Council are now seeking light. I appreciate the difficulties of the situation.

"I note that you contemplate the summoning of a strongly representative Committee next summer to lay out plans for

²¹ As a matter of fact, some such plans as that recently proposed at Oxford and Edinburgh were under consideration as far back as 1920. One which was drawn up in 1922 is outlined in *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy* (pages 255 ff.). It is not unlike the proposals of 1937.

70 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

the proposed Conference, should that Conference appear to be practicable. You will realize the absorption of the Bishops this year which will tax them rather heavily.

"I shall be grateful for any reports you are able to let me have from time to time as to the progress which is being made.

"With kind regards,

"Yours very truly,

"(Signed) RANDALL CANTUAR."

In another earlier letter, in response to a greeting from the Federal Council, Dr. Davidson wrote: "I pray God that under His good and guiding hand we may together grow from strength to strength."

Free churchmen at Oxford of course asked what had brought the Anglican archbishops out of the position of benevolent neutrality into one of sympathy and active leadership. Perhaps we may venture to answer: First of all, the increased participation of the Eastern Orthodox churchmen relieved the fear of so-called "Pan-Protestantism."²² The Anglican leaders very likely did not know what happened when, during personal conversation at Marburg, Rudolf Otto urged upon some visitors that, in connection with the four hundredth anniversary of the break between Luther and Zwingli, the Protestant bodies should come together on their own account and not wait for the Anglicans. It was the proponents of the Universal Christian Conference who advised and even insisted that this great leader restrain his impatience. One of

²² At the very time when Anglicanism was concerned about Eastern Orthodox relations, the Eastern churchmen were, as we have seen, proposing just what eventuated at Geneva, in 1920.

the proposals in 1920 was in the nature of compromise: a federation of Protestant bodies, with a looser relation of a consultative and co-operating character with the Anglican Church. Still, Protestant churchmen counselled patience and continued persuasion.

The experiences of the years since 1920 have also seemed to indicate that the development of a federal form of unity has not impaired, but has rather accelerated the desire for more organic union and the interest in "Faith and Order." In view of what we shall say further on about the results of deferring unity until the Roman Catholic Church was ready for it, it looked as though the world and the Church could not wait that long. And doubtless, also, the exigencies of this moment in the world's life and the dangers to Christianity itself were no inconsiderable factors in the recent change of attitude among Anglicans. Changes of personnel in the Anglican leadership doubtless also had something to do with the matter. As one reads Dr. Bell's characterizations of Dr. Davidson's temporizing, one wonders what might have happened if there had been a prophet in Lambeth Palace. And yet, it may be that, in unifying the Anglican communion, Dr. Davidson helped prepare the way for the larger ecumenical ideal. While it may be that Anglican leaders will need to learn a little more about the Free churchmen's ideas of democracy, and that Free churchmen may have to adjust themselves to Anglican methods of leadership, the writer has no fear of too much Anglican initiative. These are largely temperamental matters which will work themselves out. We may re-

72 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

gard, therefore, the emergence of Episcopal leadership as one of the happiest omens at Oxford and rejoice in its evidence of progress since Geneva in 1920.

Ecclesiastical England is not the only contributor of problems. In the United States there are bodies, such as the Baptist and Lutheran, which also have traditions and organizational questions to solve before the proposed World Council can become a fact. It may also be noted that men from Protestant bodies, who in the earlier days of Geneva and Stockholm were doubtful or were pre-occupied with other organizational interests, were contributing their splendid talents at Oxford.

The presence and active part taken by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cosmo Gordon Lang) and the Archbishop of York (Dr. William Temple) at the Conference on Church, Community and State, in 1937, was deeply gratifying to the few old-timers at Oxford, as well as their support of the proposed merger of "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order." And if the Anglican leaders are now making up for lost time, so much the better.

EFFORTS TO INCLUDE ROME

Remarks have been made, from time to time, by Episcopal and Anglican friends, which indicate an assumption that the Roman Catholic Church had been ignored or overlooked in the preparations for Stockholm. This has always been so trying an experience that a historical word regarding Rome should be added. When the group of Protestant leaders and one Anglican

leader were preparing for the Constance Conference, the Roman Catholic Church was approached. While not ready to unite at Constance, an arrangement was made whereby a conference with the same programme should be held by Roman Catholics at Liège, at nearly the same time. (Unfortunately, when the date came, Liège was the centre of war.) There was even the hope that, following Constance and Liège, there would be a joint conference of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Eastern churchmen.²³

When the Federal Council issued the call in 1920 its committee expressed "the preference that the ultimate conference should be inclusive of *all* Christian bodies." Again, at Geneva, in 1920, the resolution adopted was proposed by a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who, with definite intent, phrased it to include both the Eastern and Roman churches. The invitation was to "all Christian communions." As we shall see later, this action was repeated again and again. Attention is called to these experiences for the benefit of those who insist that there must be no union at all until there can be re-union with Rome.

Archbishop Soederblom made many and constant approaches to the Vatican. We learn from Dr. Ingve Brilioth that, in reply to the invitation of 1917, the Pope sent an answer through the Cardinal Secretary of State, saying that whatever was attempted in order to restore peace and goodwill was *summo pontifici, gratum et acceptum*. Knowing something of Dr. Soederblom's evident irritation on the subject at times,

²³ From a confidential pamphlet in the files of Lord Dickinson.

74 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

we wonder if our whole-souled friend, who himself often meant even more than he said, did not occasionally read more into responses from Rome than was intended.

As for Stockholm, the reader is referred to the historical narrative of approaches from Upsala, prepared by the former chaplain of Archbishop Soederblom.²⁴ It may suffice to say here that all the negative attitudes have been on the part of the Church of Rome.²⁵ One could almost write a volume describing the visits of non-Catholic delegates to the Vatican and the succession of invitations to conference for "re-union." It is, therefore, gratifying to note that Roman Catholic observers were in evidence at Oxford and Edinburgh and that in the latter city a Roman Catholic prelate publicly expressed his sympathy—with explanations.

THE CHURCHES UNITE FOR MUTUAL HELP

There is an old saying that "misery loves company," and we all know that suffering often brings human beings closer together. We may close this part of our narrative, therefore, by calling attention to another ecumenical factor, not always so recognized. In post-war Europe, with its lingering hostilities of mind and spirit, what could be more conducive to the goodwill and friendship which are basic to any unity than the mutual help exchanged between churches, the stronger coming to the aid of the weaker? Thus an-

²⁴ *Rome und die Stockholmer Bewegung*, Nils Karlstroem, Upsala, 1931.

²⁵ *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy* contains a section on this, p. 209 ff.

other stream gathered, whose force can hardly be overestimated. During the war the churches of France and Belgium sent messengers to the United States, seeking sympathy and aid for their devastated church buildings and depleted forces. The Federal Council and its constituent bodies responded with no little generosity. As soon as the war ceased, aid was sent to Germany and later on to the Russian Orthodox Church. The splendid work of Near East Relief,²⁸ during and after the war, was also opening up just the approaches needed to the Eastern Churches.

Here, too, another ecumenical pioneer joined the gathering forces of Christian unity, for in 1919 the Swiss churches sent Dr. Adolf Keller as a representative to the post-war meeting of the Federal Council. As a result of this visit, the Swiss Protestant Federation later united with the Council in establishing the Central Bureau for Relief of the Evangelical Churches of Europe (now called the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid), with headquarters first at Zurich and later at Geneva and a branch office in New York. This was the accomplishment of the "Bethesda Conference" of European and American church leaders, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, August 10-12, 1922, and meeting under the title: "The International Church Congress for Investigating the Situation of Protestantism in Europe." The body was formed to unite American churches with those of Europe, both for the purpose of securing American help for the latter and to

²⁸ Under the consecrated leadership of James L. Barton and Charles V. Vickrey.

76 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

develop mutual help among the European churches themselves.

In the previous November a "Conference of American Religious Bodies" had met to consider European relations. This meeting authorized the Federal Council to assist in arranging and to participate in a similar conference of the European churches, "if desired," with a view to assessing the full extent of the disaster suffered by the evangelical churches in the warring countries. The Swiss Protestant Federation thereupon accepted the suggestion, the result being that the "Bethesda Conference" (subsequently so-called because it met in the Bethesda House at Copenhagen) was called by official representatives of the Swiss, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Dutch church bodies. This was the first occasion in modern history when the church bodies of Europe had ever met in an ecclesiastically representative gathering of this nature. A volume of printed reports was prepared in advance, setting forth the condition and needs of the continental churches.

The gathering consisted of about seventy-five officially appointed representatives of thirty-seven church bodies, of twenty-one European nations, as follows: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Esthonia, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. Reports were also presented from the churches in the Ukraine and Lithuania. Among the church bodies were the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, Method-

ist, Congregational, Baptist, and the several known as Evangelical, as well as the State Churches of several nations. The personnel was representative in its quality as well as in its official standing.

It was a memorable gathering, prayerful, mutually sympathetic, brotherly. It showed how close we may be brought together by mutual suffering and need. The spirit of co-operation and federation was developed hour by hour. In the case of Great Britain, France, Switzerland, the United States and Germany, the delegates either represented national federations or were associated with them. Some prophetic spirits were even ready to organize a Federation of the Churches of Continental Europe on the spot. To Adolf Keller and the church leaders who called the Copenhagen Conference and instituted the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid belongs the credit of having liquidated the hatreds and prejudices of the War long before any political rapprochement between the former warring nations was achieved. Christian charity led the way to international comity.

The Central Bureau, while in itself autonomous, renders reports to the Universal Christian Council and functions as the "relief arm" of the American Section of the Council. Any one sitting in its sessions at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, in August, 1937, would agree that its entire membership probably composes our best informed group, not only on problems of material need, but on the questions of minorities, persecution, and the state of the continental churches in all its aspects.²⁷

²⁷ Report of the General Secretary to the Federal Council of

78 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

The final report of the World Conference on Faith and Order at Edinburgh appropriately referred to its ecumenical influence. Dr. Keller's constant visitation among the churches of the entire continent, to Great Britain and frequently to the United States, has been one of the most potent forces in creating the sympathy and understanding which are essential to the very inception and sustenance of the ecumenical spirit.

What wonder that the author of this volume found it difficult, at Oxford, to answer off-hand the oft-repeated question of the newer generation: How, when and by whom was this great movement generated? The best answer is that God was guiding many minds, in many ways, both consciously and unconsciously, for His divine intervention in the affairs of men and nations.

NATIONAL FEDERATION DEVELOPS

During all this time, national federations of churches were multiplying in Europe, including the Federal Council of the Free Churches in Great Britain, and, under differing forms and titles, in Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Spain and even in Algeria. Far-off Australia was seeking advice for its own church federation. The contagion had spread from Geneva in 1920, but with-

Churches, 1922; *Zur Lage des Europäischen Protestantismus*, by Adolf Keller, Swiss Church Federation, 1922; *International Christian Movements*, 1925; *Protestant Europe; Its Crisis and Outlook*, Adolf Keller and George Stewart, Doran, 1927; *Our Case*, publication by the American Office of the Central Bureau.

out doubt even more from the Bethesda Conference of 1922. In preparing for Stockholm there were unified bodies through which to act.

MESSAGES ON UNITY MULTIPLY

During the period from 1920 to 1925, many voices were raised in favour of closer fellowship. There were the "Malines Conversations." The Anglican and Free Churches of England and the Church of Scotland conferred together. The Moravians issued a pronouncement. These and many others created an atmosphere of faith and hope.²⁸ Coincident with Geneva was the Lambeth Conference of 1920. While its message, like those just referred to, was on Faith and Order, it partially committed itself to the ideal of Life and Work in one passage: "The Conference recommends that . . . Councils representing all Christian Communions should be formed within such areas as may be deemed most convenient, as centres of united effort to promote the physical, moral and social welfare of the people, and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of human life." This action may possibly have been in the nature of response to the appeal made to the Archbishop of Canterbury to send a representative to the Geneva meeting.²⁹ The Lambeth appeal of 1920 awakened hopes and we think is generally regarded as having been a more genuinely ecumenical approach than that of 1930.

²⁸ *Documents on Christian Unity, 1920-24*, edited by G. K. A. Bell, Dean of Canterbury; Oxford University Press, 1924.

²⁹ It fell short of the ideal in confining itself to social action without the spiritual and church emphasis which characterized Geneva.

One message in particular was notable in its prophecy of a closer union between Church and Church. This was the encyclical letter from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in January, 1920, "Unto all the Churches of Christ, wheresoever they be." It called for a *Koinonia ton ekklesion* and was issued almost at the very moment when the call for the Geneva Conference was sent by the Federal Council. It was signed by twelve metropolitans, and was a charming message, minimizing difficulties, asking the removal of "all mutual distrust," and the placing of love "before everything else." As to its concrete recommendations, the Universal Christian Council has not yet caught up with them in their proposals for "a common study and co-operation on the part of the Christian Churches." Thus did Constantinople outrun Lambeth in faith and in practice, and in spiritual emphasis.

Space forbids mention of many other sources to both the minor and the major currents of ecumenism. In all this gathering of organizational and personal forces, the reader has doubtless seen that there were certain men who followed through from before Constance to Stockholm. Among them should be mentioned: Lord Dickinson, Siegmund-Schultze, Merrill, Lynch, and Spiecker. One of them³⁰ suffered grievously during the war and is today exiled from the native land which he so faithfully served, just because of his ideals of freedom, peace and Christian brotherhood and unity. For the most part they constituted, not the ecclesiastical officialdom from stage to stage, but rather a body-

³⁰ Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze.

guard, protecting and promoting ideals which they first conceived, as these ideals and objectives grew beyond their own earlier hopes.

To attempt tribute to the multitude of other personalities than those previously named in this account, and their contributions, would mean a large "Who's Who." We may point out Sir Henry Lunn, his Grindelwald conferences, 1920-25, and his *Review of the Churches*. Those conferences, especially the one at Muerren in 1924, were highly representative. Adolf Deissmann, from the issues of his *Wochenbrief* during the war until his lamented death in 1937, was an inestimable personal force. Professor Arthur Titius, in 1925, presented the plan of the Christian Social Institute.⁸¹ René Heinrich Wallau wrote the only substantial volume preparatory to the Stockholm meeting.⁸² For twenty years Auguste Senaud has been working on the most complete bibliography of Christian unity in existence. Lucy Gardner brought the genius and experience of "Copec" to Stockholm. Professor J. Eugène Choisy, largely in the background of many movements, embodies the influence of the Swiss churches. Alfred E. Garvie has been the finest of mediators. Peter Ainslie was a great world prophet and contagious inspirer in every phase of the movement and of all the movements.

Other factors were the extensive exchange of friendly

⁸¹ After six years under the direction of Adolf Keller, this became the present Department of Research of the Universal Christian Council. Associated with Professor Titius were Elie Gounelle, Bishop Einer Billing, and others.

⁸² *Die Einigung der Kirche vom Evangelischen Glauben aus*, René H. Wallau; Furche-Verlag, Berlin, 1925.

82 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

visitors, such as that carried out by the Federal Council's Commission on Relations with Religious Bodies in Europe (now the Department of Relations with Churches Abroad and merged with the American Section of the Universal Christian Council) during the period between 1920 and 1925, and a similar service performed by the Committee on Interchange,³⁸ a joint body of the Church Peace Union, World Alliance and Federal Council. These approaches were all associated with the Stockholm proposal and were efforts to awaken interest in it.

Other influences, while not related to the Committee of Arrangements for Stockholm, such as the deepened relationships between the Foreign Missions agencies and the development of the International Missionary Council, at Crans, Switzerland, in 1920, and the visitations of John R. Mott and his associates, were indirectly contributing to the main current. Deputations from several countries, including the United States, visited sections where religious minorities were suffering political persecution. And it is far from irrelevant to include the multitude of deep personal friendships formed which inspired faith and courage and made an atmosphere in which suspicion and doubt found it difficult to breathe. In the last analysis, organizational relationships begin through the contagious spread of Christian confidence and trust from individual to individual.

³⁸ Forty-six such "friendly visitors" were credentialised by the Federal Council in 1922.

IV

PATIENCE AND PERSUASION PREVAIL

THE ROAD FROM GENEVA, 1920, TO STOCKHOLM, 1925

THE WORK OF PREPARATION

THE end of this long and circuitous journey came into sight at Geneva in 1920, but the road still led uphill. The Geneva meeting named 1922 or 1923 for its consummation, but it was soon discovered that it would take much longer. Many documents had to be sent out defining and explaining the purpose. Advance reports needed to be prepared. There were doubtful and indifferent church officials to be enlightened and persuaded, and even then some were conspicuous by their absence at Stockholm. The Committee of Arrangements, with constant enlargement of personnel and attendance, held six preparatory meetings, each one making a distinct step forward, viz.:

PETERBOROUGH, 1921—

Title of world conference fixed and general plan outlined;¹ Eastern Orthodox representation assured.

HAELSINGBORG, 1922—

Increased enthusiasm and momentum.²

¹ The records of this meeting show clearly the enormous administrative detail work called for.

² A suggestion was made at this meeting to synchronize at least geographically the meetings of Faith and Order and Life and Work. The reply from the latter is doubly interesting in view

84 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

New personalities: Prof. William Adams Brown, Prof. Adolf Deissmann, the Dean of Worcester (Dr. Ede), Dr. Walter Simons (President *ad interim* of Germany),

Election of officers for the world conference (See Appendix, page 111).

Renewal of the invitation "to *all* Christian communions."

Outline of programme fixed upon as follows:

1. The Church's obligation in view of God's purpose for the world.
2. The Church and economical and industrial problems.
3. The Church and social and moral problems.
4. The Church and international relations.
5. The Church and Christian education.
6. Methods of co-operation and federative efforts by the Christian communions.

ZURICH, April, 1923—

Programme more closely defined and purpose of the world conference re-stated as follows:

"The Conference on Life and Work, without entering into questions of Faith and Order, aims to unite the different churches in common practical work, to furnish the Christian conscience with an organ of expression in the midst of the great spiritual movements of our time, and to insist that the principles of the Gospel be applied to the solution of contemporary social and international problems."

AMSTERDAM, September, 1923—

Arrangements made for proportionate representation from church bodies³ and limited representation of "allied Christian agencies."

of the present harmonious association of the two movements. See Appendix, p. 109.

³ Provision was duly made for the Roman Catholic Church with an appendicatory note stating that this communion would probably not provide its quota.

BIRMINGHAM, 1924—

Participation in meeting of "Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship" (Copec).

Reports on organization of the Sections of the world conference.

Zurich, April, 1925

Farnham Castle, June, 1925

Preliminary meeting at

Stockholm, 1925

This group of meetings of the International Committee completed the administrative details for the world conference at Stockholm.

If one attempts to compute, in addition, the number of meetings of the Executive Committee and of the sectional committees in various parts of the world and of their executive committees and special groups, some idea will be obtained of the toil and travail over the period from 1920 to 1925, and it will astonish no one that it took five years of incessant work to start the world conference. During all these years a relatively small group of men were proceeding on faith. They may have sensed, but were largely unconscious of, the sinister forces which were developing in the political life of the world, and were far from seeing the issues which their successors were to face at Oxford. That they were guided by the Spirit of God none who gathered in the Town Hall of the University City of Oxford in 1937 could doubt, even though there may have been in that gathering Pharaohs who knew not the Josephs. And when we examine the unhappy treaties by which political leaders sought a road to peace, in contrast to the constructive policies that characterized these contemporary churchmen, we may per-

86 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

haps allow that the Church is not entirely devoid of statesmanship.

Some of these men saw portents; to some degree they understood the meaning of contemporary affairs. Theirs was not the humanistic ideal of some modern liberalism. They were not unrealistic. Any study of history thus reveals the profound truths that, in the progress of the world, two sets of causes and forces are ever operating, for evil and for good, and that for every approaching crisis God raises both means and men. Such a study also reveals the heartening fact that, in such hours of conflict, the Christian Church rises to its noblest heights and, as we witness in Germany today, is the last bulwark of our Christian civilization. It was some such faith as that which moved men who were the instruments of God in bringing Stockholm into being.

V

THE VISION TAKES STRUCTURAL FORM

STOCKHOLM IS REACHED

TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

WHILE this volume is for purposes of information and understanding, rather than of interpretation, we may call attention to some of the more general characteristics of the succeeding phases of the movement described.

The early approaches, by the foreign missions agencies and associated bodies, were for the distinct purpose of conserving and expanding their organizational interests. One has but to compare the policies and programmes of the International Missionary Council with the foreign missions ideals of the early days to witness the completeness of the transformation that has taken place in the objectives and approaches of foreign missions. The international body has followed the same path that led the church bodies to Stockholm.

Likewise the Evangelical Alliance was concerned with evangelization on a theological or confessional basis. Its social approaches were in the nature of the limited and superficial social view-points of earlier days

and no appreciable effort was made, except through Josiah Strong and some associates in the United States, to penetrate into the causes of social disorder. Its international interests were pretty much confined to the institutional conservation of the Church by its stand for religious liberty.

Those of us who went to Constance in 1914 were almost naïve in our faith. The world was ready for eternal peace. The Hague Tribunal had been set up and needed but the support of the churches to make it the arbiter of international disputes.¹ Even amid mobilization for war, most of us pursued our way to Germany without very serious concern.² A comparison also of the peace programmes of the churches as late as 1922, if not later, reveals our misapprehension. The only problem was that of creating good-will—so it was thought. No man among us went as far as Sidney L. Gulick in seeing deeply. In his early volumes,³ Dr. Gulick penetrated to causes of war which as yet the nations have scarcely touched. For the most part, however, peace leaders among the churches failed to assess the task, as it is outlined in a current volume by Dr. Henry A. Atkinson,⁴ who is evidently now re-orientating his view. And, even with all his capacity for penetration, Sidney Gulick is undoubtedly today a disillusioned man. In this connection, however,

¹ It was the establishment of this institution that was made the basis of the movement of British churchmen in 1907. See page 29.

² *Through Europe on the Eve of War.*

³ *The Fight for Peace*, Revell, 1915, and *The Christian Crusade for a Warless World*, Macmillan, 1922.

⁴ *Prelude to Peace*, Harpers, 1937.

we see that movements for peace have synchronized with those for war, or at least have arisen to contest the field.⁵

While the attitude of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, at the Hague in 1919, was largely determined by the importance of creating a body representing the churches, it was perhaps equally due to the feeling then growing, that the causes of war went deeper into our social life than peace organizations had seen.

Other forces leading to Stockholm are too many for analysis. We may, however, not inappropriately call attention to the fact that, in the United States, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was organizing and developing among Protestant bodies on a national scale just about what the Universal Christian Council became on a world basis.⁶ The rest of the world was organizing. Communism, Socialism, labor unionism were on a world basis. The International Labor Organization had been instituted by the League of Nations and was planning imposing headquarters at Geneva.

These and many other influences entered into the stream leading to Stockholm. The Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work was evidence that the Christian churches, while not leading the times, or perhaps even keeping up with the times, were at least

⁵ Once again today, as in 1907-1911, the churches are moved by the menace and fear of war. See page 116.

⁶ As we observed at Oxford in 1937, it was interesting to make comparisons with Stockholm, where continental delegates, especially German leaders, were distrustful of what they termed *Amerikanischen Aktivismus*.

90 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

catching up. Any observer at Oxford will feel sure that it was none too soon.

STOCKHOLM SUMMARIZED

And thus finally we reach Stockholm, in August, 1925, where more than five hundred representatives, to a large extent officially appointed or consented to, representing thirty-nine nations and about as many denominations, came together and the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work became a reality. The following passage from the record of its special Commission on Co-operative Movements summarizes its task, scope, and limitations, as well as its preparation for the continuance of its great work:

"The world now more or less has been bound together in common material, economic and technical development, in common selfishness and sin, in common pain and sorrow. It is simply impossible that the churches should be unmoved by the challenge of modern social life and that they should remain isolated in provincial narrowness. This conference is only one form, until now the most comprehensive, of a common grappling with most pressing problems. It would be disloyal to make such an attempt, and then give it up.

"In such co-operation no individual and no church is to be regarded as surrendering sacred convictions, but rather as putting such convictions to the test of practical life, emulating others in struggling to do the will of God.

"The divisions of Christendom are to be regarded under a double aspect. They may be to some extent legitimate and necessary, corresponding to religious and national history and temperament. Partly, it must be confessed, they are due to narrowness and sin. But even then they can only be overcome through gradually increasing mutual under-

standing and by 'the more excellent way' of love, teaching men that no individual and no section in the Church has been able to grasp the fullness of Christ. The Conference, however, and its eventual continuation, is in no way concerned with matters of creed and organization. We fully recognize that each church must do its own work in its own way. But the life of each church can be greatly stimulated and enriched by mutual intercourse and inspiration. Even where Christians have serious differences they must try to co-operate and emulate one another in doing the will of God.

"The national federations of churches have constantly exchanged messages and messengers across rivers, seas and oceans and have come to know and trust one another. It is of the deepest interest to note that during these five years for the first time in history the American churches, through their Federation, have been enabled to enter with the churches of Europe into mutual relationships which are rapidly deepening and taking form.

"The Commission recognizes and sympathizes with the general feeling which has been expressed in many quarters, that the Conference should not disband without making some provision for carrying on the work which has been so auspiciously begun. It would be lamentable if a Conference which has been so long planned and prayed for, and which records a high mark in the movement for co-operation in the fellowship and service of Christ, should evaporate in mere discussion, interesting and inspiring as it is to us who are privileged to participate in it.

"It is to be clearly understood at the outset that any agency that may be appointed shall not deal with questions of creed or ecclesiastical organization, but that it shall strictly limit itself to the class of subjects under consideration at the Conference, namely, the Life and Work of the Church of Christ, and in particular the assertion and application of Christian principles to those problems, international, economic, social, civic, with which the future of civilization is so vitally concerned.

92 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

"It is also to be understood that it shall have no power to speak in the name or on behalf of the churches, or to take any action that shall commit any church, its deliverances being simply its own opinion, unless any particular deliverance or deliverances shall be expressly approved by the church or churches concerned."

LOOKING BACKWARD FROM THE CONTEMPORARY STANDPOINT

It was the original intention of the author to do no more than preserve a historical record of origins and leave the reader to find his own way to what succeeded after reaching Stockholm.⁷ He proposed, also, to avoid homiletical observations and conclusions. Still less did he purpose to discuss the contemporary situation, or to offer advice as to methods of procedure. He will not now attempt to forecast the future and would avoid over-assurance. Vicissitudes visited the ecumenical movement, before and after Stockholm, and we shall not be free from the mutability inherent in our human limitations. Inevitably, however, we have been led to draw comparisons and contrasts between past and present in such manner as to invite almost obvious inferences.

At Stockholm no further plans were proposed than the appointment of a "Continuation Committee." While this body had either undefined authority, or none, it set up a simple administrative organization, with geographical sections, some of which immediately became executive in nature. It was understood, however, that this committee had no ecclesiastically repre-

⁷ Upon which there are several volumes.

sentative character. The setting up of an institution for study and research was obviously necessary. This procedure was carried out with caution, because some denominational representatives at Stockholm had come almost on condition that no continuing organization should be set up.⁸

Reverting to our narrative of its historical development, let us ask: Has this ecumenical movement followed the divine law of growth? Was there not at least a minimum of artificiality? Could such an evolutionary process be halted? The answers seem apparent. As in Geneva in 1920, so at Stockholm in 1925, action had to be taken on the assumptions of faith, looking for subsequent approval or modification to be largely determined, as previously, by empirical considerations.

Hence, more or less unconsciously, "Stockholm" grew after Stockholm. As has been recorded, at Chexbres, Switzerland, the Continuation Committee resolved itself into the Universal Christian Council.⁹ Once again, the representative character of the body was established by either subsequent or tacit approval or by the maintenance of a benevolent neutrality on the part of various churches.

One of the best interpretations of the history recorded in this volume was written by Charles H.

⁸ Particularly American Lutherans.

⁹ At this time there were even denominational leaders in the progressive Federal Council, which had been all along a propulsive force, who voted to approve the action pretty much because it was a *fait accompli*. Had it been submitted in advance, their vote might have been negative, or at least qualified.

94 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Brent.¹⁰ Bishop Brent finds justification in the movement for its ecumenicity "in motive and operation." It had created a genuine "fellowship." Like Josiah Strong ten years before, Bishop Brent saw and foresaw a "challenge" to "the Church's authority" in the threatening conflict of Church and State; "the issue is clear and the Christian Church must face it or else imperil the charter given it by Christ."

Bishop Brent's words proved a prophecy. Far sooner than he thought, social and political powers gathered and took the form of totalitarianism in States and nationalism in some of the churches. These influences could be met only by the unity of Christian forces. Just as the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches was providentially prepared in 1919, so the Universal Christian Council was ready for the inevitable conference at Oxford in 1937.

Meanwhile, the World Conference on Faith and Order also had been finding its way. What would not have been advisable in 1922 at Haelsingborg¹¹ seemed possible, if not obvious, to men of vision and faith in 1937. The two streams which started simultaneously at Geneva in 1920 converged. History, as we have attempted to record it, seems to make the proposals at Oxford and Edinburgh almost inescapable. If we have made this apparent, we may hope that this record of the past will offer some guidance for the future, and

¹⁰ *Understanding*, Longmans, Green & Company, 1925. Bishop Brent's historical resumé was somewhat less accurate than his interpretation.

¹¹ See page 100.

strengthen the faith of our contemporary leaders. And let us be grateful that the larger union began in prayer and worship in St. Paul's Cathedral.

LEADING UP TO THE CONFERENCE, JULY 12-26, 1937

The years between 1925 and 1937 saw the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work grow from a rather amorphous "Continuation Committee" to a closely linked organization with an "Ecumenical Council," active, well set up sectional units, corresponding to the natural geographical divisions, and after the distinguished service of Dr. Henry A. Atkinson and Dr. Adolf Keller in guiding the affairs of the central administration, the achievement of a permanent secretariat located at Geneva, now under the able direction of Henri Louis Henriod. After a period of relative inaction, the American Section again sprang into life under the leadership of its chairman, the late Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, and the Rev. Henry Smith Leiper, D.D., who became its Executive Secretary in 1930. Practically from that time forward all energies were bent to the task of preparing for a new world conference, more authoritatively representative in character, wider even than Stockholm in scope, and resting back on far more intensive preparatory work than was possible in 1925. The place chosen was Oxford, and the year 1937. Dr. Leiper's story of the Oxford Conference ¹² gives an excellent account of the tremendous work accomplished in laying the foundations for that

¹² *World Chaos or World Christianity*, Willett, Clark & Co., 1938.

conclave of churches and nations. Suffice it here to comment on the gratifying response from the Anglican Church in contrast to its relatively meagre participation at Stockholm.¹⁸ Gratifying also was the presence of so many outstanding church women where in 1925 there had been only a handful. Notable new figures had emerged; for instance, Dr. Joseph H. Oldham, who did an enormous amount of the basic preparatory work, making two extensive journeys through the United States in order to confer with American church and lay leaders and theologians, and leaving a deep impression on all who were privileged to meet with him. The Archbishop of Canterbury occupied the place of pre-eminence at Oxford which was held by the late Nathan Soederblom at Stockholm. A touching tribute was paid to the memory of the latter through the deference paid to his widow at the opening session in the Sheldonian Theatre in 1937.

New rivulets of denominational co-operation had been added to the main stream of the ecumenical movement, and, above all, the eventual confluence with the Faith and Order movement, which met at Edinburgh a few weeks later, was already in sight.

In contrast to Stockholm, the Oxford Conference convened in an atmosphere of uncertainty and surrounding tension which was not unlike the eve of the meeting at Constance; though the acceleration of events was not so headlong, as has been proved since. Two wars—the civil war in Spain and the conflict in

¹⁸ See pages 65 ff.

the Far East—were in progress or precipitated in the summer of 1937; the Ethiopian War was but lately over. The danger of a world-wide clash between the Church and the State which at Stockholm had appeared only as a low-hanging cloud on the horizon, in size “like a man’s hand,” loomed large at Oxford. The cloud had spread over the sky; the débacle of the Christian Church in Russia and the reverberations of the church struggle in Germany were a pervasive presence during that fortnight in the peaceful university precincts, sitting like a sinister apparition in every committee meeting, at every sectional reunion, and even in those moments of other-worldliness when all were bowed in prayer and worship. It scarcely needed the almost inevitable absence of the German Evangelical Church delegation¹⁴ to underscore the timeliness of the theme chosen for this second world conference: “Oxford Conference on Church, Community, and State.” Scarcely a nation was represented where the possibility of conflict between Church and State was not observable, in many already foreshadowed by isolated incidents not as yet numerous, but certainly and ominously indicative. The fundamental question of how much the Christian may, with an upright heart and a clean conscience, “render unto Cæsar” is once more crucial. Those who had hitherto only dimly felt this, realized it fully at the Oxford Conference.

The existence of voluminous and scholarly reports and interpretations of that meeting of ecclesiastical

¹⁴ Representatives from the Free churches of Germany were present.

98 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

statesmen, as well as of the Faith and Order meeting at Edinburgh,¹⁵ eliminates the necessity for including further information about them in this little volume, which after all seeks merely to point back along the road and identify the waymarks which have since been overgrown and all but buried. At this writing the project for a "World Council of Churches," as proposed to and approved by both the Life and Work and Faith and Order¹⁶ movements, is being worked out by special committees and conferences. A great dream bids fair to be realized. Pray God that it may be!

THE PERVADING SPIRIT

Returning now to Stockholm, let us withdraw from the problems of organization and ask ourselves, was the Spirit of God guiding men through all these years? What were the mood and motive which pervaded and animated those who were finding their way to this ecumenical movement? Were they a body of activists or social "actioneers"? Were they just seeking economic "programmes"? Or were they under profound spiritual promptings? If one goes through the list of personnel from 1905 to 1925 he will find pastors, theologians, mystics, and educators, rather than sociologists. There were men who could interpret the movement for social Christianity in America, men who were capable of understanding the eschatological and existential theology of Europe, and some who comprehended both, whose zeal was not without knowledge.

¹⁵ Cf. Bibliography, Appendix, pages 123 ff.

¹⁶ The "Messages" of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences will be found in the Appendix, pages 114 ff.

We may cite a few illustrations and examples. Nathan Soederblom wrote¹⁷ regarding the Geneva meeting of 1920: "During the last thirty years I have been present at many international meetings. . . . I was never present at any international conference that meant spiritual action so much as this one. . . . At no previous conference did I experience so tremendous a spiritual effort as on this occasion. While praying and watching, were not hearts burning within us? Did not the power of divine love break through all the obstacles raised by bitter differences, feelings wounded to the quick, just claims and well-meant palliation or postponement?" . . . "We thank God that He was greater than our hearts." And the author, in recording this testimony, can see Soederblom, under the trees with his associates, with his Greek New Testament in hand. Of the same meeting, Ingve Brilioth writes that it included "a discussion that must rank among the most critical and dramatic incidents in the history of the movement."

Going further back, to Constance in 1914, Dr. Frederick Lynch wrote this vivid description of its session: "A solemn hush brooded over the assembly. . . . The burden of a world about to be plunged into purgatory weighed heavily on every heart. Everyone knew that on that Sunday the fate of Europe, of civilization, perhaps of Christianity itself, was to be decided. . . . There was nothing to do but pray. . . . If ever the meeting in the Upper Room has been repeated in history, it was in that hour. Outside, Germans, French,

¹⁷ *Christian Fellowship.*

100 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

and English were going out to fight one another; here Germans, French, and English were kneeling in prayer. Outside, the people were calling for blood; here representatives of twelve peoples were praying for increased love for one another. . . . I looked up once and there before me I saw a German, a Frenchman and an Englishman kneeling so together that their arms touched.”¹⁸

Is there not once more a repetition of history as we think of Oxford in 1937 and its surrounding world?

We doubt that the ecumenical movement has had a more understanding or penetrating interpreter than Adolf Deissmann, who, on his seventieth birthday, in 1936, sent us his *Una Sancta: Zum Geleit in das oekumenische Jahr, 1937*, as his last work and word. Deissmann's last chapter in *Die Stockholmer Bewegung* is on *Die Stockholmer Bewegung und die Bibel*. He characteristically and naturally turns to Paul, as he asks and answers the questions: whence comes our conference, wherein lies its strength? No Barthian could go beyond his sense of the need of penitence and reliance on God.

This ecumenical idea is more than a contemporaneous “movement.” It has been, is, and will be reformatory and constructive, but not new, as it moves from phase to phase. It goes back to Calvary. The road to Stockholm did not lead away from Christian confession and faith. The service at St. Paul's, London, July 29th, 1937, was but the visible expression of

¹⁸ *Through Europe on the Eve of War.*

two aspects of the same spiritual experience. Perhaps we may express it, for the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, from one of the addresses at Stockholm: ¹⁹

"The universal co-operative movement which has here found completeness of expression is not something that has been created or invented here. It has been simply a manifestation of the Spirit of God moving the minds, and still more the hearts, of men, just as truly as at Pentecost.

"While this movement has had its leaders and its prophets of both vision and action, it has not been, like so many of our denominational movements, the formation of a temperamental group, but rather the unifying of many diversities of race and nation, speech and language, habit of mind and method of action. Indeed this has been its history. It arose simultaneously in different areas of nationality and temperament, in Sweden, in Switzerland, in Great Britain, in America and other lands, moved by the Spirit of God ever present in every human heart. Its leadership has been associated leadership.

"What we have done during these sacred days together has not been to generate or induce unity. We have simply discovered our inherent unity of spirit as we have revealed our hearts to one another. We have agreed on things upon which men would have asserted that we were bound to disagree. We have simply discovered the elemental principle of God's moral universe, the principle of unity in diversity.

"Thus has the Spirit of God led us, because we came together in faith in Him and in faith and confidence in one another. In other words, we have discovered the simple truth that the nearer we all approach our Master, the closer we come together.

"In the last sacred hours of the Saviour's life, as He sat quietly apart with His disciples, He gave them His final

¹⁹ By the author.

102 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

message. It was not in the form of an intellectual expression of their belief. It was not a form of polity or of worship. What was that last symbol of His lordship and of their discipleship? He took a towel, He girded Himself and performed a humble act of loving service. And it has been thus in our effort here to find the Christlike way of service that we have discovered our oneness in Him and our oneness with each other.

"At one moment we have felt ourselves upon the Mountain of Transfiguration, and then in the next hour of the day we have found ourselves down upon the plain of human life, where He healed men of their diseases. At both times we have been at one with Him and have found that to be with Him was in itself unity with one another and with all who follow Him. It is as simple as this, and we can trust the future, not because here we have created an institution, but because here we have become imbued with the spirit of the Master."

At the risk of repetition, the writer is moved to express his profound belief that God was preparing His Church to meet the appalling issues of this day and year. If this volume has been discerningly read, it will be seen that it is not just the record of a congeries of events. It describes and seeks to evaluate more than a movement of history, as it discloses a divine plan slowly evolving; interpreting, through an illustrative picture, a spiritual and social process. As we reveal the sequence of causes and effects, we may witness the continuous operation of the Spirit of God upon the hearts and minds of men.

That "Life and Work" would ultimately find its spiritual complement in "Faith and Order" there was never any doubt in the minds of men who saw that the

structure was being erected on faith, in the profoundest meaning of that word. And we may today, even in the midst of seemingly demoniac forces in the world, listen to One Who prophesied: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

APPENDIX

THE CALL TO THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE

Dear Brothers in Christ:

You have doubtless heard that as a result of conferences held at The Hague in 1919, and in Geneva in 1920, arrangements have now been made for holding a Universal Conference of Christian Communions at Stockholm during the month of August, 1925.

We believe that there is a longing on the part, not merely of the trusted servants of the Church, but of all followers of our Lord and Master, to see Christendom so far united as to be able to work together in applying the principles taught by Him to the problems which confront us both in national and international life. These problems bewilder and baffle us so long as we are content to seek solutions which rely upon motives lower than the highest that we can discern for them. No Christian can doubt that the world's greatest need is the Christian way of life not merely in personal and social behaviour, but in public opinion and its outcome in public action. The responsibility for helping to meet this need which rests upon all who name the Name of Christ cannot be exaggerated.

The common purpose of our Conference therefore will be to discover lines along which we may all unite in endeavouring to meet this grave responsibility.

In our deliberations we do not propose to deal with matters of Faith and Order, although we are not unmindful of their importance. Our prayer and our hope is that through this Conference a new impetus will be given to the various movements and strivings for reunion, but the world's need is so urgent and the demand for common action on the part of all Christians so insistent at this juncture, that we cannot afford to await the fulfillment of that great hope of a reunited Christendom before putting our hearts and our hands

into a united effort that "God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." To this end we will consider such concrete questions as that of industry and property, in relation to the Kingdom of God; what the Church should teach and do to help to create right relations between the different and at times warring classes and groups in the community; how to promote friendship between the nations and thus lay the only sure foundation upon which permanent international peace can be built. In short, we hope under the guidance of the Spirit of God, through the counsel of all, to be able to formulate programmes and devise means for making them effective, whereby the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all peoples will become more completely realized through the Church of Christ.

The following subjects have been decided upon, after very careful consideration, as best expressing these ideas, and they will therefore form the basis of our studies preliminary to the conference, and upon them will be based all actions and resolutions:

1. The Church's obligation in view of God's purpose for the world.
2. The Church and economic and industrial problems.
3. The Church and social and moral problems.
4. The Church and international relations.
5. The Church and Christian education.
6. Methods of co-operation and federative efforts by the Christian communions.

Much work has already been done on these subjects, in particular in connection with the reports of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship held at Birmingham, England. Careful preparation is also going forward in the countries of continental Europe and in the United States of America.

It is distinctly understood that the resolutions passed will not be in any way binding on the Christian communions represented at the Conference, unless and until they are presented to and accepted by the authorities of each communion.

The Conference will meet in Stockholm from August 19th to August 30th of next year (1925), and during that time

106 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

its members will enjoy the hospitality of the Swedish people, whose king and leading men are taking a keen interest in the enterprise. Indeed a high and wide-spread appreciation for the Conference is being manifested throughout the whole Church in the north.

Therefore at the request of the International Executive Committee of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, we who are its officers have the honour and very great pleasure of inviting your communion to be represented by members appointed for this purpose, who will add their prayer and counsel to our common deliberations.

This letter goes forward to you as the official invitation and call for the Conference. For purposes of administration and in order that all communions may be adequately and justly represented, the Conference has been organized in four sections, one for Europe, one for the British Empire, one for America, and one for the Eastern Orthodox Church. From the section of which your nation and communion is a part, a statement of the number of your apportioned delegates is being sent.

The Conference, we believe, will afford a unique opportunity for stirring the mind and conscience of Christendom and for acquiring a clearer common vision on our Christian duties in the world today, and we therefore confidently trust that your communion will not only appoint its full number of delegates, but will do all in its power to secure for the Conference the interest, sympathy, and prayers of its members.

We depend for success from first to last upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Accepting this letter as a message from your fellow workers, will you kindly send your formal reply to the General Secretary, Henry A. Atkinson, at Geneva, to whom, or to the Bureau on Life and Work, requests for additional information may be addressed.

Signed on behalf of the International Committee:
Theodore Winton, Nathan Soederblom, Arthur J. Brown, Gregorios of Constantinople, D. Moeller, J. A. McClymont, Germanos of Thyateira, Charles S. Macfarland, Henry A. Atkinson, Eugène Choisy, Thos. Nightingale, Adolf Keller.

THE MESSAGE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE ON LIFE AND WORK

I

1. The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work assembled at Stockholm from August 19th to 30th, 1925, and composed of representatives of the greater number of Christian communions coming from thirty-seven nations of the Old and New World, and of the Near and Far East, sends this brotherly message to all followers of Christ, beseeching them to join with them in prayer, confession, thanksgiving, study and service. We regret that not all Christian communions have found it possible to accept our invitation, for in view of the vital and far-reaching issues with which we have been concerned, we cannot but hope for that co-operation of all parts of the Church of Christ without which its testimony and influence in the world must be incomplete.

2. For five years men and women have planned and prayed that this Conference might be held. Other efforts for closer relations between the churches have prepared the way. But this has proved the most signal instance of fellowship and co-operation, across the boundaries of nations and confessions, which the world has yet seen. The sins and sorrows, the struggles and losses of the Great War and since have compelled the Christian churches to recognize, humbly and with shame, that "the world is too strong for a divided Church." Leaving for the time our differences in Faith and Order, our aim has been to secure united practical action in Christian Life and Work. The Conference itself is a conspicuous fact. But it is only a beginning.

3. We confess before God and the world the sins and failures of which the churches have been guilty, through lack of love and sympathetic understanding. Loyal seekers after truth and righteousness have been kept away from Christ because His followers have so imperfectly represented Him to mankind. The call of the present hour to the Church should be repentance, and with repentance a new courage springing from the inexhaustible resources which are in Christ.

4. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that in the plan

108 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

of God and through the guidance of His Spirit the representatives of so many Christian communions have been led to assemble and have renewed in common fellowship their faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that in spite of differences, sincere and profound, they have been enabled to discuss so many difficult problems with a candour, a charity and a self-restraint which the Spirit of God alone could inspire. As we repeated the Lord's Prayer together, each in the speech his mother taught him, we realized afresh our common faith, and experienced as never before the unity of the Church of Christ.

II

5. The Conference has deepened and purified our devotion to the Captain of our Salvation. Responding to His call "Follow me," we have in the presence of the Cross accepted the urgent duty of applying His gospel in all realms of human life—industrial, social, political and international.

6. Thus in the sphere of economics we have declared that the soul is the supreme value, that it must not be subordinated to the rights of property or to the mechanism of industry, and that it may claim as its first right the right of salvation. Therefore we contend for the free and full development of the human personality. In the name of the Gospel we have affirmed that industry should not be based solely on the desire for individual profit, but that it should be conducted for the service of the community. Property should be regarded as a stewardship for which an account must be given to God. Co-operation between capital and labour must take the place of conflict, so that employers and employed alike may be enabled to regard their part in industry as special realms, possess the influence and command the knowledge without which the solution of our pressing practical problems is impossible.

In the name of the Son of Man, the Carpenter of Nazareth, we send this message to the workers of the world. We thankfully record the fact that at present, even under difficult conditions, a multitude of the workers in different countries are acting in accordance with the principles of Jesus Christ. We deplore the causes of misunderstanding and

estrangement which still exist and are determined to do our part to remove them. We share their aspirations after a just and fraternal social order, through which the opportunity shall be assured for the development, according to God's design, of the full manhood of every man. To the realization of this end we would consecrate ourselves and all our powers.

13. We have said that this Conference is only a beginning. We cannot part without making some provision for the carrying on of our work. We have therefore decided to form a Continuation Committee to follow up what has been begun, to consider how effect can be given to the suggestions which have been made, to examine the practicability of calling another such Conference at a future date, and in particular to take steps for the further study of difficult problems and that further education of ourselves and of our churches, on which all wise judgment and action must be based. May we not hope that through the work of this body, and through the increasing fellowship and co-operation of the Christians of all nations in the one Spirit, our oneness in Christ may be more and more revealed to the world in Life and Work.

14. Only as we become inwardly one, shall we attain real unity of mind and spirit. The nearer we draw to the Crucified, the nearer we come to one another, in however varied colours the Light of the World may be reflected in our faith. Under the Cross of Jesus Christ we reach out hands to one another. The Good Shepherd had to die in order that He might gather together the scattered children of God. In the Crucified and Risen Lord alone lies the world's hope.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

THE LETTER TO ROBERT H. GARDINER

Dear Mr. Gardiner:

Your letters to his Grace, the Archbishop of Upsala, as well as your letters to Dr. Macfarland, in which you suggest that the Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on

110 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Life and Work should be held at the same place and about the same time as the Conference on Faith and Order, so that some delegates may attend both Conferences, were laid before the Life and Work Committee meeting at Haelsingborg on August 12, 1922.

All the members of the Committee on Life and Work, fully recognizing the importance of the work of the Faith and Order movement, are in sympathy with its aims and are grateful to you for the excellent and self-sacrificing work you have done in connection with that movement. Before the Church can be one and the prayer of our blessed Lord that His disciples may be one can be fully answered, there must be agreement on Faith and Order.

We are with you in your ideal, and realize how much you have done to bring this ideal before the various communions and the large measure of success you have attained.

Nevertheless, the Committee on Life and Work, having carefully considered your proposal, has come to the conclusion that it will be wiser not to hold two World Conferences at the same time and place. The advantage of the convenience to those who are identified with both movements would, they venture to think, be more than counterbalanced by the confusion which would be created in the mind of the public.

The realization of the ideal of the Faith and Order movement must be comparatively remote, whereas the Christian communions can without difficulty unite here and now in the application of the Christian ethics and the spirit of Christ to the problems of the present day.

The Bishop of Winchester has rightly said: "That in the region of moral and social questions we desire all Christians to begin at once to act together as if they were one body in one visible fellowship. This can be done by all alike without injury to theological principles." As Dr. Kapler has said: "Doctrine divides, but service unites."

We are concerned with service, and we believe that by serving the co-operation of the churches we shall break down prejudices and create a spirit of fellowship which will render the accomplishment of the aims of the Faith and Order movement less difficult to achieve.

Meanwhile, we are of the opinion that the two movements had better be kept distinct. Life and Work confining itself in the main to the co-operation of the churches in the application of the Spirit and Teaching of Christ to social, national and international relationships, while Faith and Order devotes its attention to the ultimate but more remote goal of unity in Doctrine and Church Order.

We may say that after careful and sympathetic consideration of your proposal, the Committee on Life and Work are unanimous as to the wisdom of keeping the two Conferences entirely distinct.

In behalf of the Executive Committee of the Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work in its session at Haelsingborg, Aug. 14, 1922.

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

NATHAN SOEDERBLOM,
Chairman at the Session
in Haelsingborg.

HENRY A. ATKINSON,
General Executive Secretary.

OFFICIALS OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE AT STOCKHOLM, 1925

Joint Presidents: The Archbishop of Upsala; The Archbishop of Canterbury; Rev. Arthur J. Brown; The Patriarch of Constantinople.

Joint Vice-Presidents: The President of the Council of the German Federation of Evangelical Churches; Rev. J. A. McClymont, former Moderator of the Church of Scotland; the General Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America; the Metropolitan of Thyateira.

Secretaries: Rev. Henry A. Atkinson, General Secretary; Associate Secretaries, Prof. J. Eugène Choisy, Rev. Adolf Keller, Rev. Thomas Nightingale.

THE PROGRAMME FOR STOCKHOLM

The following principles were proposed for the study groups at Stockholm by the preparatory meeting held at Zurich, Switzerland, in April, 1923:

"(1) Since the purpose of the Conference is to determine the Christian way of life in the modern world, our point of

112 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

view must be primarily religious, and only secondarily economic and political.

"(2) In determining what is Christian, we must begin with those Christian principles which are simplest and most commonly accepted, such as our faith in God, our Father, in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and in the present power of the Holy Spirit.

"(3) In applying these principles to present-day conditions and problems, we should distinguish between the definition of the Christian ideal and the method by which the ideal is to be realized; and in determining the latter we should further distinguish between those steps which are immediately practicable and those which pre-suppose other steps which have not yet been taken.

"(4) We must further distinguish between those points on which all Christians, or at least a very large number of Christians, agree, and those more difficult and disputed points (largely of method) as to which Christians equally sincere and honest differ. We must not let our disagreement in the second group obscure our agreement in the first, or inhibit the action now immediately possible if the convictions at present existing could be concentrated in definite and practicable channels. When we have to do with those who do not share our Christian principles, we must distinguish between the differences which are due to sincere difference of conviction and those which are the result of deliberate selfishness.

"(5) In all our study we must keep close to the facts: thus, in judging of the present condition of society, we must ask (1) How far the social life in our respective nations falls short of the Christian ideal? (2) What remedies have been tried by our churches, and with what success? (3) What more still needs to be done? In each case we must ask how far do men *think* and *feel* in Christian ways? In what kind of *action* have their thoughts and feelings expressed themselves?

"(6) While recognizing the importance of studying this ethical problem which we face as individuals, we should especially emphasize the duties which rest upon us in our corporate capacity as churches."

With reference to the special topics, the following suggestions were made:

"(1) Our discussion of the task of the Church in view of God's plan for the world should sum up the results of all other studies. This topic should be given a place of prominence in the programme, as giving the key-note to the whole.

"In the study of this question special attention should be given to the Church's responsibility for applying Christian principles to all sides of life, and an effort should be made to determine in what way and to what extent this can be done. In this connection the Christian view of the State and its relation to the Church might be studied.

"(2) In discussing the subject of the relation of Christianity to industry we should emphasize the general questions of principle which would govern all questions of detail (such as hours, wages, housing, care for the old and disabled, etc.). Such principles are the sacredness of human personality, the right of the individual to share in the determination of the conditions of his life and work, and the interest of the community as a whole in the disputes between the members. A survey should be given of what already has been accomplished in the application of Christian principles to industry in the different nations. Special attention should be called to the difficulties in the application of such principles going out of international relationships.

"(3) In discussing the relation of the Church to social and moral questions consideration should be given to the wide-spread decay of formerly accepted social standards and the accompanying looseness of life in wide sections of the population. An effort should be made to discover the causes of this lapse—not merely the fundamental cause in the decay of faith in God, but also the secondary causes in the profound change in social conditions. We should learn what is being done in the different countries to combat these evils and seek to discover in what way each of us can assist the others in our common task.

"(4) The discussion of the Church and international relations should cover the field of the application of Christian

114 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

principles to the relation between nations and races and especially the central question of war, and the methods which must be taken to prevent it. Special attention should be given to the responsibility of the churches in the field, both in the way of preventing friction from arising, or removing causes of friction where they already exist and of creating the spirit which will make such action possible. In this study assistance should be sought from the World Alliance and other similar organizations.

"(5) In studying Christian education we should consider not only the recognized agencies of religious education, such as the home, Sunday Schools, State schools, which give official religious instruction, or independent parochial schools, but also the various forces which help to form public opinion, such as the press, religious and secular, literature and the arts, including the theatre and the cinema. Important questions in this field are the ways of maintaining and strengthening the Christian element in education against powerful opposing influences and the application of modern pedagogical standards to religious instruction. Special attention should be given to colleges and universities and to the educational aspect of commerce and industry.

"(6) In studying the subject of Christian co-operation and unity, assistance should be sought from other organizations which are functioning in this field. Special emphasis should be laid on the practical aspects of Christian unity, and the effort should be made to determine how far concerted action for special aims is possible on the part of other organizations which differ in the conception of the Church."

MESSAGES OF OXFORD AND EDINBURGH, 1937

SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

EDINBURGH, 1937

Affirmation of Unity

The Second World Conference on Faith and Order held in Edinburgh in August, 1937, brought together four hundred and fourteen delegates from one hundred and twenty-two Christian communions in forty-three different countries.

The delegates assembled to discuss together the causes that keep Christian communions apart, and the things that unite them in Christian fellowship. The Conference unanimously approved the following statement *nemine contradicente*:

We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.

This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself, Who lived, died and rose again to bring us to the Father, and Who through the Holy Spirit dwells in His Church. We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious gospel.

Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms of our life in Christ, because we understand differently His will for His Church. We believe however that a deeper understanding will lead us towards a united apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His Spirit into fullness of unity.

We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, misunderstandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made towards our goal of a common mind.

In this Conference we may gratefully claim that the Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another, and has given us a fuller vision of the truth and enriched our spiritual experience.

We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures. We recognize in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions.

116 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take.

We believe that every sincere attempt to co-operate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the severed communions together in increased mutual understanding and goodwill. We call upon our fellow-Christians of all communions to practice such co-operation; to consider patiently occasions of disunion that they may be overcome; to be ready to learn from those who differ from them; to seek to remove those obstacles to the furtherance of the gospel in the non-Christian world which arise from our divisions; and constantly to pray for that unity which we believe to be our Lord's will for His Church.

We desire also to declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the distractions and dissensions of this present time. We know that our witness is weakened by our divisions. Yet we are one in Christ and in the fellowship of His Spirit. We pray that everywhere, in a world divided and perplexed, men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, Who makes us one in spite of our divisions; that He may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in Him; to Whom be glory for ever.

A MESSAGE FROM THE OXFORD CONFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The delegates to the World Conference on Church, Community, and State, assembled at Oxford from July 12 to 26, 1937, send at the close of their deliberations the following message to the Churches of Christ throughout the world:—

In the name of Christ, greetings.

We meet at a time when mankind is oppressed with perplexity and fear. Men are burdened with evils almost insupportable and with problems apparently insoluble. Even in countries which are at peace unemployment and malnutrition sap men's strength of body, mind, and spirit.

In other countries war does its "devil's work," and threatens to overwhelm us all in its limitless catastrophe.

Yet we do not take up our task as bewildered citizens of our several nations, asking if anywhere there is a clue to our problems; we take it up as Christians, to whom is committed "the word of reconciliation," that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

The first duty of the Church, and its greatest service to the world, is that it be in very deed the Church—confessing the true faith, committed to the fulfillment of the will of Christ, its only Lord, and united in Him in a fellowship of love and service.

We do not call the world to be like ourselves, for we are already too like the world. Only as we ourselves repent, both as individuals and as corporate bodies, can the Church call men to repentance. The call to ourselves and to the world is to Christ.

Despite our unfaithfulness God has done great things through His Church. One of the greatest is this—that, notwithstanding the tragedy of our divisions and our inability in many important matters to speak with a united voice, there exists an actual world-fellowship. Our unity in Christ is not a theme for aspiration; it is an experienced fact. We can speak of it with boldness because our Conference is an illustration of it. We are drawn from many nations and from many different communions, from Churches with centuries of history behind them and from the younger Churches whose story covers but a few decades; but we are one in Christ.

The unity of this fellowship is not built up from its constituent parts, like a federation of different States. It consists in the Sovereignty and redeeming acts of its one Lord. The source of unity is not the consenting movement of men's wills; it is Jesus Christ whose one life flows through the Body and subdues the many wills to His.

The Christian sees distinctions of race as part of God's purpose to enrich mankind with a diversity of gifts. Against racial pride or race-antagonism the Church must set its face implacably as rebellion against God. Especially, in its own life and worship there can be no place for barriers because

118 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

of race or colour. Similarly the Christian accepts national communities as part of God's purpose to enrich and diversify human life. Every man is called of God to serve his fellows in the community to which he belongs. But national egotism tending to the suppression of other nationalities or of minorities is, no less than individual egotism, a sin against the Creator of all peoples and races. The deification of nation, race, or class, or of political or cultural ideals, is idolatry, and can only lead to increasing division and disaster.

On every side we see men seeking for a life of fellowship in which they experience their dependence on one another. But because community is sought on a wrong basis, the intensity of the search for it issues in conflict and disintegration. In such a world the Church is called to be in its own life that fellowship which binds men together in their common dependence on God and overleaps all barriers of social status, race, or nationality.

In consonance with its nature as true community, the Church will call the nations to order their lives as members of the one family of God. The universal Church, surveying the nations of the world, in every one of which it is now planted and rooted, must pronounce a condemnation of war unqualified and unrestricted. War can occur only as a fruit and manifestation of sin. This truth is unaffected by any question of what may be the duty of a nation which has to choose between entry upon war and a course which it believes to be a betrayal of right, or what may be the duty of a Christian citizen whose country is involved in war. The condemnation of war stands, and also the obligation to seek the way of freeing mankind from its physical, moral, and spiritual ravages. If war breaks out, then preeminently the Church must manifestly be the Church, still united as the one Body of Christ, though the nations wherein it is planted fight one another, consciously offering the same prayers that God's Name may be hallowed, His Kingdom come, and His will be done in both, or all, the warring nations. This fellowship of prayer must at all costs remain unbroken. The Church must also hold together in one spiritual fellowship those of its members who take dif-

ferent views concerning their duty as Christian citizens in time of war.

To condemn war is not enough. Many situations conceal the fact of conflict under the guise of outward peace. Christians must do all in their power to promote among the nations justice and peaceful co-operation, and the means of peaceful adjustment to altering conditions. Especially should Christians in more fortunate countries press the demand for justice on behalf of the less fortunate. The insistence upon justice must express itself in a demand for such mitigation of the sovereignty of national states as is involved in the abandonment by each of the claim to be judge in its own cause.

We recognize the State as being in its own sphere the highest authority. It has the God-given aim in that sphere to uphold law and order and to minister to the life of its people. But as all authority is from God, the State stands under His judgment. God is Himself the source of justice, of which the State is not lord but servant. The Christian can acknowledge no ultimate authority but God; his loyalty to the State is part of his loyalty to God, and must never usurp the place of that primary and only absolute loyalty.

The Church has duties laid upon it by God, which at all cost it must perform, among which the chief is to proclaim the Word of God and to make disciples, and to order its own life in the power of the Spirit dwelling in it. Because this is its duty it must do it, whether or not the State consents; and the State on its side should recognize the duty and assure full liberty for its performance. The Church can claim such liberty for itself only as it is also concerned for the rights and liberties of others.

In the economic sphere the first duty of the Church is to insist that economic activities, like every other department of human life, stand under the judgment of Christ. The existence of economic classes presents a barrier to human fellowship which cannot be tolerated by the Christian conscience. Indefensible inequalities of opportunity in regard to education, leisure, and health continue to prevail. The ordering of economic life has tended to enhance acquisitive-

120 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

ness and to set up a false standard of economic and social success. The only forms of employment open to many men and women, or the fact that none is open, prevent them from finding a sense of Christian vocation in their daily life.

We are witnessing new movements which have arisen in reaction to these evils but which combine with their struggle for social justice the repudiation of all religious faith. Aware of the reality of sin, the Church knows that no change in the outward ordering of life can of itself eradicate social evil. The Church therefore cannot surrender to the Utopian expectations of these movements, and their Godlessness it must unequivocally reject; but in doing so it must recognize that Christians in their blindness to the challenging evils of the economic order have been partly responsible for the anti-religious character of these movements.

Christians have a double duty—both to bear witness to their faith within the existing economic order and also to test all economic institutions in the light of their understanding of God's will. The forces of evil against which Christians have to contend are found not only in the hearts of men as individuals, but have entered into and infected the structure of society, and there also must be combated. The responsibility of the Church is to insist on the true relationship of spiritual and economic goods. Man cannot live without bread, and man cannot live by bread alone. Our human wealth consists in fellowship with God and in Him with our brethren. To this fellowship the whole economic order must be made subservient.

The questions which have mainly engaged the attention of the Conference are questions that can be effectively dealt with, in practice, only by the laity. Those who are responsible for the daily conduct of industry, administration, and public life must discover for themselves what is the right decision in an endless variety of concrete situations. If they are to receive the help they need in making responsible Christian decisions new types of ministry will have to be developed by the Church.

The fulfilment of the tasks to which the Church is called

today lies largely in the hands of youth. Many loud voices are calling on young people to give themselves to political and social ideals, and it is often hard for them to hear the voice of Jesus Christ who calls them to be servants of the eternal Kingdom. Yet many of the younger generation, often in spite of ridicule and sometimes of persecution, are turning to Him, and individually as well as in Christian youth movements devote themselves to the renewal of the life of the Churches and to making known the Good News of Christ by word and action. We rejoice in their brave witness.

In the education of youth the Church has a twofold task. First, it must be eager to secure for every citizen the fullest possible opportunity for the development of the gifts that God has bestowed on him. In particular, the Church must condemn inequality of educational opportunity as a main obstacle to fullness of fellowship in the life of the community.

While the Church is thus concerned with all education it has, also, a special responsibility to realize its own understanding of the meaning and end of education in the relation of life to God. In education, as elsewhere, if God is not recognized, He is ignored. The Church must claim the liberty to give a Christian education to its own children. It is in the field of education that the conflict between Christian faith and non-Christian conceptions of the ends of life, between the Church and an all-embracing community life which claims to be the source and goal of every human activity, is in many parts of the world most acute. In this conflict all is at stake, and the Church must gird itself for the struggle.

As we look to the future it is our hope and prayer that the Spirit of God may cause new life to break forth spontaneously in a multitude of different centres, and that there may come into being a large number of "cells" of Christian men and women associated in small groups for the discovery of fresh ways in which they may serve God and their fellow-men.

We have deeply felt the absence from our fellowship of the Churches that have not been represented at the Conference. Our hearts are filled with anguish as we remember

122 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

the suffering of the Church in Russia. Our sympathy and gratitude go out to our Christian brethren in Germany; we are moved to a more living trust by their steadfast witness to Christ and we pray that we may be given grace to bear the same clear witness to the Lord.

We have much to encourage us since the Conference at Stockholm twelve years ago. The sense of the unity of the Church in all the world grows stronger every year. We trust that this cause will be yet more fully served by the World Council of Churches, proposals for which have been considered by the Conference and commended to the Churches.

We have tried during these days at Oxford to look without illusion at the chaos and disintegration of the world, the injustices of the social order and the menace and horror of war. The world is anxious and bewildered and full of pain and fear. We are troubled yet we do not despair. Our hope is anchored in the living God. In Christ, and in the union of man with God and of man with man, which He creates, life even in face of all these evils has a meaning. In His Name we set our hands, as the servants of God and in Him of one another, to the task of proclaiming God's message of redemption, of living as His children, and of combating injustice, cruelty, and hate. The Church can be of good cheer; it hears its Lord saying, "I have overcome the world."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy.* By Charles S. Macfarland. 396 pages. \$1.00.
- Steps Toward the World Council.* By Charles S. Macfarland. 130 pages. A historical sketch of the background of the Council. \$1.00.
- International Christian Movements.* By Charles S. Macfarland. 200 pages. \$1.00.
- The Oxford Conference (Official Reports).* Introduction by J. H. Oldham. 320 pages. \$2.00.
- World Chaos or World Christianity.* By Henry Smith Leiper. Church Unity and Union: Oxford and Edinburgh. 200 pages. \$1.50.
- The Message and Decisions of Oxford.* 88 pages. Single copy, 25c; 10 or more, 20c; 100 or more, 18c; 500 or more, 15c plus postage.
- Highlights of Oxford.* By Henry Smith Leiper. 16 pages. 10c each; 10 or more, 5c.
- Church, Community and State: A World Issue.* By J. H. Oldham. 47 pages. 25c.
- Christ's Way and the World's—in Church, State and Society.* By Henry Smith Leiper. Paper cover, 65c; cloth, 90c. 144 pages.
- Discussion Syllabus* for use with the above in group study. 16 pages. 10c.
- The Church and the World Crisis. A Study Outline.* By Charles H. Corbett. 40 pages. 25c.
- Christianity—and Our World.* By John C. Bennett. 65 pages. 50c.
- Church and State.* By Rhyllis A. Goslin. Headline Book of Foreign Policy Association. Illustrated with charts. 46 pages. 25c.
- Church and State in Contemporary America.* By William Adams Brown. 384 pages. \$2.75.

124 STEPS TOWARD THE WORLD COUNCIL

Church and State on the European Continent. By Adolf Keller. 382 pages. \$2.50.

Church and State in the Modern World. Edited by Henry P. Van Dusen. 223 pages. \$2.00.

Christian Faith in the Modern State. By Nils Ehrenstroem. 168 pages. \$1.50.

Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts: A Study in Christianity, Communism, and Nationalism in Asia. By William Paton. 224 pages. \$.150. Paper cover, 75c.

The Church and Its Function in Society. By Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. J. H. Oldham. 238 pages. \$2.00.

Report of the Edinburgh Conference, 1937. 10c. In quantities: 50 copies, \$4.00; 100 copies, \$6.00; 500 copies, \$25.00.

Edinburgh, 1937. The story of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order. By Hugh Martin. 99 pages (paper cover). 80c.

INDEX

A

Ainslie, Peter, 63, 81
 Alexandria, Patriarch of, 10, 59
 American Bible Society, 13
 American and Foreign Christian Union, 23
 American McAll Association, 23
 Ammundsen, Valdemar, 38
 Amsterdam, 1923, Meeting at, 84
 Anderson, Bishop William F., 55
 Anglicanism, Attitude of, 65 ff., 96
 Asquith, H. M., 31, 67
 Atkinson, Henry A., 50, 54, 55, 88, 95
 Aulen, Gustav E. H., 63

B

Baker, J. Allen, 29, 32, 35
 Balfour, A. J., 67
 Baltic States, Persecution in, 15
 Baptist World Alliance, 23
 Barthians, 29
 Barton, James L., 75
 Berne, Switzerland, Conference at, 38
 Berne, Switzerland, Synodical Council of the Evangelical Church of, 47
 Bethesda Conference, 28, 75, 76
 Bible, Circulation of, 12
 Billing, Bishop Einer, 81
 Birmingham, 1924, Meeting at, 85
 Blum, George, 33
 Boynton, Nehemiah, 59, 63
 Brent, Bishop Charles H., 61, 63, 65, 94
 Brewer, David J., 31
 British Council for Promoting an International Christian Conference, 49
 British and Foreign Bible Society, 13
 Brown, Arthur J., 63
 Brown, William Adams, 84
 Burnham, F. W., 9

C

Cadman, S. Parkes, 95
 Cannon, Bishop James, Jr., 9, 63
 Carlyle, Thomas, 12

Carnegie, Andrew, 34 ff.
 Cecil, Lord Robert, 31, 67
 Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid, 25, 28, 65, 74 ff.
 Chester, Samuel H., 63
 Chexbres, Switzerland, Conference at, 28, 93
 Chichester, Bishop of (G. K. A. Bell), 10, 34, 50, 66
 Choisy, J. Eugène, 38, 55, 59, 63, 81
 Christian Endeavor Union, World's, 23
 Christian Union, Society for the Promotion of, 21
 Church Peace Union, 35, 54, 82
 Church and State, 35
 Clifford, John, 31, 32
 Conference of American Religious Bodies, 76
 Conference on Church, Community and State (Oxford, 1937), 9, 51, 96, 97; Message of, 116 ff.
 Conference on Federation, Interchurch, 18, 31
 Confession, United Protestant Apostolic, 21
 Congo, Belgian Administration in, 16
 Constance, Council of, 36
 Constance, Germany, Church Peace Conference, 27, 34 ff., 88
 Constantinople, Patriarchate of, 80
 "Copec," 81, 85
 Cramer, J. A., 38, 63
 Crans, Switzerland, Conference at, 82

D

Dawson, Christopher, 9
 Davidson, Randall (Archbishop of Canterbury), 31, 36, 42, 48, 56, 61, 65 ff., 79
 Dayton, Genevieve, 11
 Deissmann, Adolf, 10, 48, 50, 61, 81, 84, 100
 de Moor, J. C., 42
 Dickinson of Painswick, Lord, 10, 29, 31, 33, 36, 38, 50, 64, 73, 80

Dryander, Ernst, 31, 42, 45
 Duckert, Armand, 42

E

Eastern Orthodox Churches, 60, 61, 64 ff.
 Ecumenical Bodies, Interdenominational, Undenominational and Denominational, 22 ff.
 Ecumenical Body, an Early Plan for, 20 ff.
 Ecumenical Conference, 44 ff., 54 ff.
 Ecumenical Leaders, Characterizations of, 85, 86
 Ecumenical Methodist Conference, 23
 Ecumenical Movement, Transition and Transformations in, 87 ff.; Progress of, 92 ff.
 Ecumenical Missionary Conference, 24
 Ede, W. M. (Bishop of Worcester), 32, 38, 84
 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 1910, 24, 66
 Eiche, Die, 31
 Ellis, Marian (Lady Parmoor), 49
 Emery, Louis, 35, 38, 39, 40
 European Churches, Conference of, 27
 Evangelical Alliance, The World's, 14 ff., 28

F

Farnham Castle, 1925, Meeting at, 85
 Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 14, 16, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34, 39, 43 ff., 46 ff., 49 ff., 50, 56, 57 ff., 63, 65, 73, 75, 76, 82, 89
 Federal Council, Commission on Church and Social Service, 20
 Federal Council, Committee on Ecumenical Conference of, 56 ff.
 Federal Council, Committee on Relations with the Eastern Churches of, 65
 Federal Council, General Secretary of, 9, 36, 41, 42, 43 ff., 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 54 ff., 63, 66, 69, 77
 Federal Unity, its Effect on Organic Union, 70
 Federation of Men's Brotherhoods, 23

Fellowship of Reconciliation, 37
 Ferencz, Bishop Joseph, 41
 Fisher, Fred B., 55
 Fliedner, Hans, 10
 Foreign Missions, 12, 24, 25, 82
 France and Belgium, Devastated Churches of, 75
 French Protestant Federation, 25, 59
 Friendly Visitors to Europe, 82
 Froendt, Antonia H., 11

G

Galdau, Florea, 65
 Gardiner, Robert H., 36, 61; Correspondence with, 109 ff.
 Gardner, Lucy, 81
 Gardner, William E., 9
 Garvie, Alfred E., 81
 Geneva, 1920, Conference at, 27; Called by Federal Council, 59 ff.; Message of, 62
 Geneva, Consistory of, 48
 German Churchmen, War Message of, 66
 Germanos, Metropolitan, 10, 59
 German Evangelical Church, 40, 97
 Giampiccoli, Ernest, 63
 Gleditsch, Jens, 63
 Goodrich, Chauncey W., 55
 Gounelle, Elie, 36, 81
 Great Britain and Germany, Churchmen of, 27, 30, 31
 Grindelwald Conferences, 81
 Greer, Bishop David, 41
 Gulick, Sidney L., 88
 Gummerus, Professor, 56

H

Haelsingborg, 1922, Meeting at, 83
 Hague Tribunal, The, 88
 Harnack, Adolf, 31, 34
 Hekker, W. F., 41
 Hellerstroem, A. O. T., 55
 Helwig, J. A., 41
 Henderson, Archibald, 31
 Henriod, Henri Louis, 95
 Herold, O., 38, 51, 54, 55
 Hodgkin, Henry, 37, 38
 Home Missions, European, 25
 Horne, Silvester, 31
 Horton, Robert F., 31
 Hungary, Reformed Church of, 53
 Hurst, John, 63
 Huss, John, 36

I

Interchange, Committee on, 82
International Church Congress
for Investigating the Situation
of Protestantism in Europe, 75
International Congregational
Council, 23
International Missionary Coun-
cil, 82
International Labor Organiza-
tion, 89

J

Jezequel, Jules, 36
Johansson, Archbishop Gustaf, 41
Judson, Adoniram, 13

K

Karlstroem, Nils, 10, 74
Klaveness, F., 50
Keller, Adolf, 6, 10, 23, 63, 75,
77, 78, 81, 95

L

Laidlaw, Walter, 36
Lambeth Conference, 23, 66, 79
Lang, Cosmo Gordon (Arch-
bishop of Canterbury), 72, 96
Lansdowne, Lord, 67
Larsen, Lauritz, 63
League of Nations, 89
Leenmans, H. A., 41
Leiper, Henry Smith, 95
Liège, Proposed Conference at,
73
London, 1914, Meeting in, 35, 39
London Missionary Society, 13
Lord, Rivington D., 36
Lunn, Sir Henry, 81
Lutheran World Convention, 23
Lynch, Frederick, 32, 33, 34, 55,
56, 57, 59, 63, 80, 99

M

MacClymont, J. A., 63
MacGill, John D., 63
McNeill, John T., 13
"Malines Conversations," 79
Mathews, Shailer, 41
Melle, F. H. O., 10
Merrill, William P., 9, 35, 36,
63, 80
Message, 1914, to the Churches
of the World, 41
Messages on Unity, 79 ff.
Methodist Episcopal Church,
General Conference of, 44

Meyer, F. B., 33
Monnier, Henri, 10
Monod, André, 55
Morgan, Campbell, 31
Mott, John R., 82
Muerren Conference, 81

N

National Council of Evangelical
Free Churches, 25
National Federation, 78 ff.
Neander, Professor, 60
Near East Relief, 64, 75
Nightingale, Thomas, 63
Nuelsen, Bishop John L., 63

O

Oldham, Joseph H., 96
Ostenfeld, Bishop H., 41, 45, 46,
47, 61, 63
Otto, Rudolf, 70
Oud Wassenaer, World Alliance
Meeting at, 27, 50

P

Papadopoulos, Professor C. A.
(Metropolitan of Athens), 10,
59
"Pan-Protestantism," Anglican
Fear of, 70
Paris, 1919, Conference at, 55, 56
Parmoor, Lord, 49
Peace and Arbitration, Federal
Council's Commission on, 34
Peacemaker, The, 31
Peterborough, 1921, Meeting at,
83
Poland, Archbishop of, 45
Potsdam, Royal Castle at, 33
Pratt, Nathaniel M., 20

R

Rade, Martin, 31
Raffay, Bishop Alexander, 63
Ridley Hall, Cambridge, En-
gland, 77
Richter, Julius, 31
Ris, G., 42
Rogers, Henry Wade, 32
Roman Catholic Church, Attitude
of, 72 ff., 84
Roman Catholic Conference, Zu-
rich, 1918, 46
Rushbrooke, J. H., 31
Russia, Church of, 65, 75

S

Salvation Army, 23
 Sanford, E. B., 32
 Schaff, Philip, 22
 Schmucker, Samuel S., 21 ff., 28
 Schreiber, A. W., 38, 61
 Scotland, Presbyterian Church of, 53
 Senaud, Auguste, 11, 81
 Shillito, Edward, 10
 Siegmund-Schultze, Friedrich, 10, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 50, 61, 80
 Simons, Walter, Chief Justice, 84
 Soederblom, Archbishop Nathan, 10, 27, 40, 42, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 73, 96, 99
 Spiecker, F. A., 30, 33, 80
 Stead, William T., 67
 Stewart, George, 78
 Stockholm Conference, 1925, 10, 11, 25, 27; Committee of Arrangements for, 63; Work of Preparation, 83 ff.; Programme, 84; Summarized, 90; The Pervading Spirit, 98 ff.; Call to, 104 ff.; Message of, 107 ff.; Officers of, 111; Programme of, 111 ff.
 Stoylen, Bishop, 46
 Strong, Josiah, 16, 17, 18 ff., 20, 88, 94
 Student Christian Federation, World's, 23
 Sunday School Convention, World's, 23
 Sweden, Church of, 40
 Sweden, Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches of, 47
 Swiss Conference of Churches, 27, 39
 Swiss Protestant Federation, 50, 52, 54, 75
 Szabo, A., 63

T

Tandberg, Bishop Jens, 42, 45, 47
 Temple, William (Archbishop of York), 72

Titius, Arthur, 81
 Turner, Fennell P., 61
 Tuttle, Bishop Daniel, 41

U

Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, 9, 10, 13, 25 ff., 28, 30, 40, 59 ff.; Development of, 95 ff.; Spirit of, 101, 102
 Universal Christian Council, American Section, 77, 82, 95

V

Vaud, National Church of the Canton of, 39
 Versailles, Treaty of, 37, 53
 Vickrey, Charles V., 75
 Von Bodelschwingh, 31

W

Wallau, René Heinrich, 81
 Wilson, Woodrow, 43, 44
 Woods, Theodore (Bishop of Winchester), 50
 World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, 27, 36 ff., 49 ff., 54, 82, 89
 World Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System, 23
 World Conference on Faith and Order, 24, 25 ff., 36, 64, 78, 94; Message of Edinburgh Conference, 114 ff.
 World Council, Proposal for in 1937, 94, 98
 World War, The Churches and the, 53

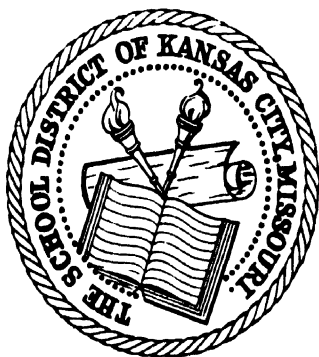
Y

Young Men's Christian Association, 23
 Young Women's Christian Association, 23

Z

Zelie, John S., 65
 Zurich, 1923, Meeting at, 84
 Zurich, 1925, Meeting at, 85

Kansas City
Public Library



Presented to the Library by
Religious Exhibit
A. L. A.
Raymond P. Morris

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



141 666

